Aberdeenshire

C O U N C I L

Education & Children's Services

**REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE –
6 DECEMBER 2018**

NORTHERN ALLIANCE: REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT (PHASE 2) PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

1   Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.1   Note the progress of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2);

1.2   Note a grant of up to £1,086,067 has been allocated to the Northern Alliance to enhance the Regional Improvement Collaborative's activities and capacity building.

2   Background / Discussion

2.1   The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative [RIC] between eight local authorities, across the north of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar [Western Isles], Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. The Northern Alliance is committed to improving the educational and life chances of children and young people.

2.2   Each RIC was asked by a joint Steering Group, consisting of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and COSLA, to produce a Regional Improvement Plan. The Regional Improvement Plan is tasked with outlining how the RIC intends to reduce inequalities and target improvement in the four national priorities from the National Improvement Framework [NIF].

2.3.   The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2) was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services Committee on 30 August, 2018. The Committee approved the Plan subject to further clarification being added to the figures on the number of teachers prior to publication and a bullet point being added to reflect the importance of culture and music activities. The Plan was submitted to Education Scotland on the 3 September, 2018, and signed off by HM Chief Inspector of Education/Chief Executive of Education Scotland on 17 October, 2018.

2.4   In support of the delivery of the Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2), the Collaborative produced a workforce plan/resource bid, which identified the resources required to ensure workstreams are effectively resourced and supported. The workforce plan/bid was submitted on 3 September, 2018, to Education Scotland. The Scottish Government, on 2 November, 2018, made a grant of up to £1,086,067 to support RIC activity and capacity building over the current school year (01/08/2018 to 31/07/2019).

2.5 The Scottish Government has requested an update from the RIC in December, 2018/January, 2019, on progress towards securing additional staffing and networks, as identified in the workforce plan/resource bid.

2.6 To date, the Northern Alliance continues to make sound progress.

- **Emerging Literacy workstream:**
  - o 95 schools in Aberdeenshire are involved in the workstream.
  - o School support consists of initial whole-day training (for new schools) and six network sessions throughout the year (for all schools).
  - o There is a skeleton school improvement plan insert for the 18/19 session which can be used by schools, following their self-evaluation, and linked to the whole-school Emerging Literacy audit.
  - o Practitioners have access to online resources to support the observation/ assessment of, and planning for, learning in early literacy, language and communication.
  - o Practitioners have access to, and are signposted, to online training resources, which can be used as part of whole-school CPD.
  - o There is an Early Level Literacy and English progression framework linked to the benchmarks. This is being woven into the network sessions.
  - o The Emerging Literacy workstream is in the process of working with early years, school, educational psychology and allied health professional teams at local level to plan for sustainability of the approach into the 19/20 session and beyond.

- **Numeracy workstream:**
  - o NA Numeracy Progression completed and made available to schools in July, 18 (Early, First, Second).
  - o General agreement that each local authority follows its own path, subsequently sharing what has worked.
  - o Baseline collected from P3s and P4s in Dec. 2017, using Gloss assessments.

- **1 +2 Modern Languages workstream:**
  - o Developing 1+2 in secondary BGE – building on last year's Scotland-wide languages roadshows, and sharing and comparing models across authorities.
  - o Started to share NA models and strategic documents to support schools.
  - o Planning development of sustainable training to meet the varying needs of primary teachers.
  - o Gathering of authority strategies to identify baseline of activity (using Govt Survey responses and Insight data to establish current picture and measuring improvement).
  - o Identification of key workstreams for 1+2 this session, including P1-S3 entitlement, DYW/business links, Transition, CLPL.
  - o Establishing collaboration and partnerships: Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Education Scotland, University of Highlands and Islands, Initial Teacher Education and Aberdeen University.
  - o Trialling development of smarter communication – using 'Teams' on Glow.

- **Community Learning and Development workstream:**
  - Across the workstream, smaller groups are analysing data / information and measurements.
  - The group is identifying how they might target family learning within each of 8 local authorities.
  - Link in with Emerging Literacy to explore interdependencies.

- **Leadership Development workstream:**
  - Development group established, with all NA local authorities represented.
  - 3 meetings (including 1 in Orkney).
  - Leadership frameworks developed and discussed.
  - 2 specific outcomes identified.
    Leadership development strategy for NA confirmed;
    'All schools (or group of schools) are able to articulate their approach to leadership development at all levels'.

- **Systems Development workstream:**
  - Group reconstituted with new members have met to discuss the school element of this workstream.
  - Have agreed in principal a way forward to support improvement, by collaborating on a common approach to evaluative language and a means of developing a shared understanding and expectations of standards. HGIOS 4 to be used as our supporting framework.
  - Discussion has taken place with our ES Regional Advisor to plan the delivery of this, involving QIOs and HTs from across the Northern Alliance.
  - Discussion around sharing our different approaches and local agreements to classroom observations.
  - Yammer group set up for those involved in this workstream as a means to communicate quickly and share any documentation etc.
  - Aberdeenshire secondary school QIV planned for November, with participation from colleagues across NA (Highland and Aberdeen City) as a means to begin to share approaches, practice and develop shared standards etc.

- **Early Learning and Childcare**
  - Early Years Lead and Early Year Improvement Advisor in post from 1/10/18 until 31/03/2020. Both posts are 0.6FTE.
  - A NA brief for infrastructure projects has been delivered. All other improvement plan actions are ongoing.
  - Individual meetings with local authorities to discuss progress/challenges with delivering the expansion.
  - Representing NA at National ELC Partnership Forum.

- **Data Sharing and Performance workstream:**
  - Continues to work constructively with Education Scotland to take forward a new process for sharing and interrogating data.

- **Equalities workstream:**
  - LGBTI group has presented at the Scottish Learning Festival.

- o It has been decided, however, to open out this group to make it a wider Equalities workstream. The young people themselves have asked that we have some way of identifying and supporting group practice in schools, so that this can be spread across the NA, and are keen to work with us on a Charter Mark for equalities.

- **Children's Services and Children's Services Planning workstreams:**
  - o The Northern Alliance is evaluating the aforementioned workstreams to consider whether it would be more effective to merge the two programmes.
  - o The Collaborative is also reviewing group membership and looking to identify a sponsor and lead for Children's Services.

- **E-learning workstream:**
  - o Shetland Islands' Council and Highland Regional Council have appointed staff to the e-Sgoil Management Team.
  - o The team is currently standardising polices, practices and procedures in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that inter-authority delivery is as efficient and streamlined as possible:
    QA procedures
    Internet Safety Policy e-Learning
    Pupil, School and e-Sgoil Contract
    E-Sgoil Handbook
    E-Sgoil Improvement Plan
  - o Working group to develop digital learning pedagogy.
  - o Working closely with the GTC and EIS to ensure that all practices and documentation comply with national guidelines and agreements.

- **Future Delivery Models**
  - o The Sustaining Education in Communities Conference was held on 14 September in Inverness and brought a range of stakeholders together to try and better understand the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention, falling school rolls, as well as new models that will enrich rural communities.

- **Rural Poverty workstream:**
  - o The Northern Alliance is working to identify a lead to take this important workstream forward. The Regional Lead is working with HR colleagues to develop a post job/secondment description.

2.7 In term of next steps, the Northern Alliance will use the allocated funding grant to strengthen resources and collaboration to support learning and teaching, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

2.8 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

3.1 The Committee is able to 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.

4 Implications and Risk

4.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as Appendix 1 and there are no negative impacts identified. There is a positive impact as follows:

- the Regional Improvement Plan has a specific workstream on Equalities, specifically focussing on supporting LGBTI+ young people in schools across the Northern Alliance area

4.2 There are no direct staffing and financial implications arising from this report. The Northern Alliance has secured a Scottish Government grant of £1,086,067 to be used for the purposes of the Programme and for no other purpose. The funding will be drawn down in March, 2019.

4.3 The following Risk has been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: 'Working with Other Organisations' regarding partnership working Corporate Risk Register.

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Director of Education & Children's Services

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Aberdeenshire
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity ("activity" is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Education & Children's Services
Section	Education
Title of the activity etc.	Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan
Aims of the activity	Update on the work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative
Author(s) & Title(s)	Laurence Findlay

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	n/a
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Discussion at ECS Committee Head Teachers Officers
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils.	n/a
External data (census, available statistics).	n/a
Other (general information as appropriate).	n/a

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	n/a

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	n/a	
	n/a	
	n/a	
	n/a	

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	yes			
Age – Older			Yes	
Disability			Yes	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Gender – male/female			Yes	
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?		
Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	There is a workstream on equalities within the plan which will support young people and staff across the Northern Alliance	
	The delivery of the Regional Improvement Plan will contribute to breaking the cycle of deprivation and support the developing young workforce. The changes will positively impact on Aberdeenshire's economy and prosperity.	
	The Regional Improvement Plan will lead to improved outcomes for children, young people and their families. This will impact positively, particularly for those who are adversely affected by poverty.	
	The Regional Improvement Plan takes account of need and will have a positive impact on individual communities across Aberdeenshire. It also encourages the sharing of best practice across the region, which will be to the benefit of Aberdeenshire.	

Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?	
If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	A consultation has been undertaken with young people, parents and school staff as well as partners. Specific consultation has taken place with LGBT+ young people from across the Northern Alliance with regards the work stream on equalities

Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?		
These should be included in	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	n/a	

any action plan at the back of this form.		

Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?	
These should be included in the action plan.	n/a

Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?
There is a focus on equalities within the plan and this is one of the key workstream areas

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?	
These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	This will be monitored in line with the Northern Alliance governance arrangements

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?		
Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	No negative impacts have been identified.	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.				

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.				
Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Education & Children's Services		
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan		
	3) **Authors:** I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/ activity.	Name: Laurence Findlay Position: Director of ECS Date: 12 November 2018 Signature:		Name: Position: Date: Signature:
		Name: Position: Date: Signature:		Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Date:		
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Position: Date:		Name: Position: Date:
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.			Date:
	7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk			Date:
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO				Date:

Action Plan

Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications