

**NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 Following the publication of the first draft of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education in 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 by The First Minister, the Scottish Government carried out an extensive national consultation. The consultation programme involved a wide range of stakeholders and different ways for them to contribute to the topic. Argyll and Bute's response to the consultation was approved by the Council at its meeting in November 2015. The Scottish Government has published a consultation and engagement report (see appendix A) which summarises the feedback it received and upon which it has produced the revised National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education which will be incorporated into the draft Education Bill currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament.

1.2 This paper provides the committee with information on the statutory intention of the Scottish Government to introduce the new National Framework and outlines some of its provisions. It notes the publication of the first Interim Framework Report (enclosed as appendix B) and provides an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services are taking forward to address the new statutory duties to be met.

**1.3 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the publication of the revised National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education by the Scottish Government.
- b) Note the consultation feedback received by the Scottish Government during the consultation programme for the draft improvement framework.
- c) Note the timeline indicated by the Scottish Government for the phased implementation of the National Improvement Framework.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Following the publication of the first draft of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education in 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 by The First Minister, the Scottish Government carried out an extensive national consultation. The consultation programme involved a wide range of stakeholders and different ways for them to contribute to the topic. Argyll and Bute's response to the consultation was approved by the Council at its meeting in November 2015. The Scottish Government has published a consultation and engagement report (see appendix A) which summarises the feedback it received and upon which it has produced the revised National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education which will be incorporated into the draft Education Bill currently being considered by the Scottish Parliament
- 2.2 This paper provides the committee with information on the statutory intention of the Scottish Government to introduce the new National Framework and outlines some of its provisions. It notes the publication of the first Interim Framework Report (enclosed as appendix B) and provides an outline for Committee of some of the actions that Education Services are taking forward to address the new statutory duties to be met.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:
- a) Note the publication of the revised National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education by the Scottish Government.
  - b) Note the consultation feedback received by the Scottish Government during the consultation programme for the draft improvement framework.
  - c) Note the timeline indicated by the Scottish Government for the phased implementation of the National Improvement Framework.

## 4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The First Minister has reinforced the Scottish Government's commitment to continually improve Scottish Education and close the attainment gap. The adoption of an outcomes focussed improvement framework is to be welcomed and will provide a more sophisticated assessment than the sole reliance on senior phase SCQF qualifications attainment or input measures such as teacher numbers or pupil: teacher ratios in isolation. The draft framework published in September 2015 drew significant interest across a wide range of stakeholders and different response formats.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government received feedback from almost 600 attendees who participated in 9 regional consultation events, from around 900 children and young people who also attended 2 events, from a range of stakeholder organisations and from 110 online surveys. Although Argyll and Bute Council is not listed in page 3 of the consultation report, the council's submission was made following agreement at the November 2015 council meeting. The full summary of feedback to the consultation programme is contained in the Consultation and Engagement Report enclosed at Appendix A to this report.
- 4.3 The summary report demonstrates a wide general consensus and agreement on the need for a NIF for Scottish Education. Although the detail of the feedback highlights a range of significant issues or concerns on how it is implemented, the pace of its introduction and the implications arising from its introduction. In publishing the revised NIF, the Scottish Government has sought to take cognisance of the feedback it has received however significantly a great deal of detail remains to be developed through statutory guidance which it is hoped will ensure implementation is not rushed.
- 4.4 Very significantly, as yet there is no detailed information on the implementation arrangements and implications. There is no information on any resourcing to support the implementation of the NIF or detailed consideration on the impact on teacher workload and capacity. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has however announced that she will establish a national working group on teacher workload due to concerns raised by teaching trade unions and this will undoubtedly need to consider the additional potential burdens that the NIF will apply.
- 4.5 The revised NIF is intended to contribute directly to the National Outcome to "ensure that our children and young people are equipped through their education to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens". Consequently the Scottish Government's vision for education is for:
- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring every child achieves the highest standard in literacy and numeracy and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and

- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed.
- 4.6 The Scottish Government's key priorities have been updated following the consultation as:
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
  - Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
  - Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
  - Improvements in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people
- 4.7 The NIF is formed around six key drivers for education improvement which are represented in pie chart format within the framework (see appendix B). These are:
- School leadership
  - Teacher professionalism
  - Parental engagement
  - Assessment of Children's Progress
  - School Improvement
  - Performance Information
- 4.8 The framework defines each of these drivers for improvement, outlines why they are important and how they will contribute to delivering on the vision for education noted above. The framework also suggests at high level the type of data or evidence that will be collated to indicate progress on each of these drivers and what that evidence will tell them. At this stage the implementation arrangements for collecting this evidence is not fully formed and will be followed by statutory guidance which will detail those arrangements.
- 4.9 The framework will bring together key information to evaluate performance and will use that data and evidence to plan improvements for children. The NIF driver information is set out in appendix B. However the key features include bringing together data on:
- Inspection grading and self-evaluation information on leadership of change
  - Head Teacher qualifications including the Standard for Headship and for Leadership and Management
  - Career Long Professional learning for teachers and resultant qualifications
  - Effective moderation of teacher judgement in literacy and numeracy
  - Effective parental engagement and involvement in children's learning
  - New national standardised assessments at P1, P4, P7 and S3 which will focus on progress on literacies and numeracy
  - Senior phase qualifications and awards
  - Progress on children's health and wellbeing

- Positive and sustained destinations, employability skills and careers information and advice services
- School performance, as informed by inspection gradings and self evaluation activity
- School Attendance and exclusions performance
- Reporting requirements on the various elements of the NIF

- 4.10 A significant focus has been given to the introduction of standardised testing and assessment in the consultation and these concerns are alluded to in the summary report. The framework itself does not outline how they will be addressed however and we will require to await the statutory guidance. It is helpful however that there is recognition that this needs to be based around the teaching professional's assessment of child's progress and that the standardised tests comprise only one relatively small contribution to that assessment. These issues will include confirmation of the actual format of the tests, determining the timing of the tests, and very critically how performance data at school level is reported and used. This latter point is exceptionally critical to avoiding the unintended consequences of teaching to the test rather than to the individual children's needs that characterised the previous 5-14 model that pre-dated Curriculum for Excellence. Once the guidance is received the Council will need to consider how it is implemented in Argyll and Bute and builds on the existing approaches to assessment.
- 4.11 The Scottish Government has published an Interim Framework Report for 2015 using some of the available national data on Scottish Education as a baseline for the development of the annual reports that will follow the implementation of the NIF. There will be a duty on local authorities to publish an annual report on their progress on the new statutory duties and an update to the requirements for schools to produce annual standards and quality reports and improvement plans.
- 4.12 Until the statutory guidance is received it is unclear exactly how the NIF will articulate with other public sector policy highlighted in the council's response to the consultation. These include the Early Years Collaborative, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and Teaching Scotland's Future. Helpfully these are referenced in the NIF but the detail on how they link will need to await the guidance. Additionally there is no advice on any additional resource to local authorities to accommodate these additional activities beyond the one off £100m Attainment Fund monies targeted to areas of urban deprivation reported at the December Community Services Committee. Of that sum, Argyll and Bute will only receive around £20,000 targeted to a single school.
- 4.13 The expansive nature of the NIF will provide a better range of indicators regarding the quality of education in Scotland rather than the narrow focus on teacher numbers and senior phase qualifications. There is however a continuing commitment being sought by the Scottish Government to maintain teacher numbers as part of the 2016-17 financial settlement and no indication of movement in that requirement as the NIF is implemented.

4.14 The Scottish Government has confirmed that the implementation of the NIF is to be phased in which helpfully addresses some concerns around the pace of its introduction. The implementation programme is scheduled over a three year period between 2016 - 2018 and the anticipated timetable is represented below:

#### **2016**

- Development and piloting of new national standardised assessments
- Publication of advice and guidance on achievement of a CfE level in literacy and numeracy
- Interim reporting arrangements for schools and local authorities
- Increased moderation and support for teacher professional judgement
- Work with local authorities and parent organisations to improve the consistency of reporting to parents of children's progress
- Further work to develop evidence from early years activity and alignment with school years
- Inclusion of Key Performance Indicators from the Developing Young Workforce programme
- Consideration of a wider range of awards and achievements including those gained from Community Learning and Development
- Development of statutory guidance on reporting duties under Education (Scotland) Bill

#### **2017**

- Introduction of new national standardised assessments in schools
- New reporting duties under Education (Scotland) Bill
- Introduction of more evidence on early years
- First Statutory Framework reporting for schools and local authorities

#### **2018**

- Development of standardised assessments for Gaelic Medium Education
- Consideration of evidence of children's progress in other curricular areas

4.15 Education Services in responding to the National Improvement Framework will have a focus on "aiming for excellence and improving outcomes for Argyll and Bute learners". This will focus on closing the equality gap for all children and young people. Within Argyll and Bute deprivation must not only be seen as based on identified deprived communities but also address rural deprivation.

The strategy for improving learning outcomes will focus on the key drivers identified by Scottish Government. Areas which will have the biggest impact on "closing the gap", increase the ambition, aspiration and expectations of every child and young person;

- Delivering excellent learning and teaching in every classroom, every day;
- Developing effective leadership at all levels;
- Engaging family and wider community;

- Focusing on literacy and numeracy as platforms on which to build future learning, and
- Using information intelligently to understand progress.

Considerable work has already been undertaken in each key driver area to establish a secure foundation for any new developments during session 2015/16.

In response our key drivers will be the main focus for new developments:

- Developing effective leadership at all levels from class teacher up to senior officers;
- Focusing on literacy and numeracy as platforms on which to build future learning, and
- Using information intelligently to understand progress.

- 4.16 Developments are currently taking place in the Primary Sector with a programme of initial engagement which commenced in September 2015. From September to March all primary schools will take part in an initial scoping day held centrally. Schools will then focus on developing a baseline from which to secure further improvements.

Schools will be supported by the central education team to undertake a scoping exercise to determine the current progress of learners within each school utilising current data and evidence held within each establishment. The priority of our initial focus will be on literacy and numeracy.

This is being rolled out as follows:

#### **Stage 1 (September- October 2015)**

Largest Schools

1 School identified as part of Scottish Attainment Challenge

Smallest Schools (not in shared headship) – covering most rural isolation

11 Shared Headship Schools – support from Central Staff

#### **Stage 2 (January/March 2016)**

Schools with Teaching HT

Additional staffing will be allocated to support this initial stage of collecting data and evidence to identify appropriate context.

- 4.17 A key aspect of the National Improvement Framework has been the appointment of 32 Attainment Advisors with a part time allocation to Argyll and Bute. The Attainment Advisor will work with the Authority to determine both the National and Authority improvement priorities.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Scottish Government carried out an extensive consultation programme on the first draft of the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education following its publication on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. The consultation demonstrated strong support for the introduction of an NIF however there

remains widespread concerns about the detail of its implementation and the implications that arise. The revised NIF has now been published by the Scottish Government along with a summary consultation and engagement report and an interim Framework Report 2015. These documents are appended to this report for information. Much of the detail regarding the implementation will need to await the production of the statutory guidance following the passage of the Education Bill which is currently before parliament.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – The development of the National Framework for Scottish Education supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government and the delivery on the national outcomes. The framework would support delivery on the SOA Outcomes 1 and 3
- 6.2 Financial – Potential resource implications arising from the introduction of the NIF. Specifically around the standardised testing and assessment, collation of data, additional reporting at class, school and authority level. This cannot be quantified until the exact detail of the statutory guidance is known
- 6.3 Legal – It is anticipated that the NIF will be put on a statutory basis by the passage of the Education (Scotland) Bill currently before parliament. This will apply further, new statutory duties on local authorities
- 6.4 HR – No implications arising directly from this report
- 6.5 Equalities – one of the two main tenets of the Scottish Government's vision for education is to address educational inequalities. There is no current evidence base that standardised testing leads to a reduction in inequalities and can only be viewed as one element that contributes to professional teacher judgement and assessment.
- 6.6 Risk – No implications arising directly from this report
- 6.7 Customer Service – The NIF is clear around the expectations for parental involvement and engagement which should provide positive benefits in supporting their role in their children's education.

**Cleland Sneddon**  
**Executive Director of Community Services**

**Councillor Rory Colville**  
**Policy Lead for Education and Lifelong Learning**

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For further information contact:  
Ann Marie Knowles, Head of Education,  
Tel: 01369 708474,  
email: [annmarie.knowles@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:annmarie.knowles@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Appendix 1: National Improvement Framework – Consultation and Engagement Report (January 2016)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491745.pdf>

Appendix 2: National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education (January 2016)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491758.pdf>

Appendix 3: National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education – Interim Framework Report (January 2016)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491743.pdf>