

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE REVIEW

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the publication by the Scottish Government of proposals for the reform of Education governance and improvement (Education Governance: Next Steps) on 15 June 2017, a Joint Steering Group was established comprising officers representing the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES).
- 1.2 The Joint Steering Group produced a detailed set of proposals to develop an Improvement Collaboration model that secured the continuing accountability and responsibility of local authorities for the provision of education services. The proposals were endorsed by COSLA and subsequently agreed by the Scottish Government with a number of conditions that required local authorities to move swiftly to establish the Collaboratives by end of October 2017.
- 1.3 The proposals position Argyll and Bute Council appropriately within the eight authority Northern Alliance area with Highland; Western Isles; Shetland; Orkney; Aberdeenshire; Aberdeen City; and Moray Councils.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Council:
 - 1.4.1 Notes the work of the joint steering group in developing proposals for Regional Improvement Collaboratives as set out in the appendices to this report.
 - 1.4.2 Notes the agreement of COSLA Leaders at their meeting of 29 September 2017 to the report of the joint steering group and that this positions Argyll and Bute Council within the Northern Alliance area.
 - 1.4.3 Notes the requirement of the Depute First Minister that the Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Regional Improvement Leads are in place for the end of October 2017 and that a Regional Improvement Plan is required to be agreed by end January 2018.
 - 1.4.4 Notes the establishment of the Northern Alliance Collaborative's Convenor's Convention across the Northern Alliance area.
 - 1.4.5 Notes that expressions of interest have been sought from existing Directors

of Education across the Northern Alliance authorities for a secondment opportunity to the Regional Improvement Lead role and that interviews are scheduled to take place in the last week in October 2017.

- 1.4.6 Endorse the actions taken by officers to give effect to the agreement made by COSLA Leaders with the Scottish Government.
- 1.4.7 Agrees that further reports on the progress of the Regional Improvement Collaborative or on the detail of any other significant element of the Next Steps proposals be reported to the Community Services Committee.

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At its meeting of 29 June 2017, the Council considered the outcome of the Scottish Government Review (Empowering Teachers, Parents and Communities to achieve Excellence and Equity – A Governance Review) and the related publication of proposals (Education Governance: Next Steps) on 15 June 2017. The proposals were broad ranging and had the potential to fundamentally change the role of local government in the governance and management of education services.
- 2.2 Over the course of the summer a joint steering group comprising officers representing the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) have worked intensively together to develop detailed proposals based on the policy direction in the Next Steps document but which retains the statutory local authority role for education standards and quality. In doing so existing informal collaborative arrangements between local authorities are formalised.
- 2.3 A copy of the report of the joint steering group is attached at Appendix A to this report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- 3.1 Notes the work of the joint steering group in developing proposals for regional improvement collaboratives as set out in the appendices to this report.
- 3.2 Notes the agreement of COSLA Leaders at their meeting of 29 September 2017 to the report of the joint steering group and that this positions Argyll and Bute Council within the Northern Alliance area.
- 3.3 Notes the requirement of the Depute First Minister that the Regional Improvement Collaboratives and Regional Improvement Leads are in place for the end of October 2017 and that a Regional Improvement Plan is required to be agreed by end January 2018.

- 3.4 Notes the establishment of the Northern Alliance Collaborative's Convenor's Convention across the Northern Alliance area.
- 3.5 Notes that expressions of interest have been sought from existing Directors of Education across the Northern Alliance authorities for a secondment opportunity to the Regional Improvement Lead role and that interviews are scheduled to take place in the last week in October 2017.
- 3.6 Endorse the actions taken by officers to give effect to the agreement made by COSLA Leaders with the Scottish Government.
- 3.7 Agrees that further reports on the progress of the Regional Improvement Collaborative or on the detail of any other significant element of the Next Steps proposals be reported to the Community Services Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Following a national consultation on education governance during 2016 and the publication of a consultation report, the Depute First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills published the Scottish Government proposals following the analysis of the consultation responses entitled "Education Governance: Next Steps". The proposals were significant and wide ranging. They included provisions which would have changed the role of local authorities in terms of accountability and responsibility for education.
- 4.2 The proposals indicated the establishment of education regions with the appointment of new Regional Directors reporting to the new Chief Executive of Education Scotland by October 2017; the development of a new Education Act; delegating additional duties and leadership responsibilities to Head Teachers through the development of a Head Teacher's Charter; the establishment of a Scottish Education Council to be chaired by the Cabinet Secretary; consultation on a fair funding for schools model; the introduction of a new inspection model and a range of workforce planning, recruitment and training initiatives. A full outline of provisions were presented to Council in the June 2017 report.
- 4.3 These provisions were set out with an ambitious timeline for their achievement commencing in the summer of 2107.
- 4.4 The provisions suggested strongly that local government would no longer have a lead role in the management and governance of education in schools and was framed in a support services role. There were significant implications in relation to local accountability, democratic oversight and in relation to the strategic leadership structures within the Council.
- 4.5 Joint Steering Group – Regional Improvement Collaboration for Education

Detailed engagement between officers of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland, COSLA, SOLACE and ADES led to agreement to establish a Joint Steering Group to work over the summer period to develop proposals based on the policy direction outlined in the Next Steps document. The remit for the group

was agreed as:

- Guiding principles: Clear guiding principles will be developed and agreed to frame the work of the collaboratives and help to 'operationalise' the policy intentions in the 'Next Steps' document.
 - Functions: Building on the purpose of the collaboratives as set out in the 'Next Steps' paper (Section 3.1 and 4.1 in Annex A), consider the essential functions that each collaborative must discharge, and the extent to which other functions should be for each collaborative to determine. This will include what needs to be consistent across the collaboratives and where there is scope for regional flexibility in terms of approaches to improvement.
 - Leadership: Proposals for putting in place interim leadership arrangements that will enable the collaboratives to develop their work, and consider arrangements for filling leadership roles in the longer-term. This includes views of the group on the skills and qualities that those leading the collaboratives will need to demonstrate and build on existing collaboratives.
 - Staffing: Initial guidance on the optimal staffing mix of the collaborative, drawing on existing local authority officers, Education Scotland and staff from other agencies.
 - Geography: Agree the process, building on existing work, to define the regional improvement collaborative geographies, ensuring reach and deliverability in every part of Scotland and to every school.
 - Accountability: Options to consider local democratic accountability alongside national accountability.
 - Measures of success: Initial thinking on criteria to describe what success would look like at the various stages of the development and implementation of the collaboratives; including the initial launch, the formation and content of a collaborative action plan, at the end of year one, and so on. It is anticipated that all improvement measures should be firmly based around the four National Priorities as set out within the National Improvement Framework (NIF).
- 4.6 At the COSLA Leaders meeting in August, a local government proposal for Regional Collaboration was agreed – this proposed a bottom up approach to collaboration which included an Improvement Lead appointed from within existing local authority staff across the collaborative area and lines of accountability to each individual local authority, their elected members and to the Chief Inspector of Education Scotland.
- 4.7 The Improvement Collaborative proposal set out in the report of the Joint Steering Group represents a significant move by the Scottish Government towards the local authority position and has the following features:

- A move towards “Improvement Collaboratives” rather than “Regional Improvement Collaboratives. They will be:
 - Outcome Focused
 - Child Centred
 - Thematic – ensuring function comes before structure
 - Robust, locally driven and evidence based
 - Agile and Flexible
 - Empowering
- Developed on guiding principles which centre on a “Getting it Right for Every Child” (GIRFEC) approach.
- Be asymmetrical – a recognition that each Improvement Collaborative will be different in the work that it does as their work will be drawn from local priorities drawn from local evidence.
- Will not be “bodies” and will not therefore have the capacity to employ staff or hold budgets.
- Will move away from using directive language like “provide” towards “support/ enhance and facilitate”.

4.8 The proposal sets out six collaborative area in Scotland and positions Argyll and Bute more appropriately within the Northern Alliance area comprising eight local authorities (Argyll and Bute; Highland; Western Isles; Shetland; Orkney; Aberdeenshire; Aberdeen City; and Moray Councils). This represents the authorities with whom we undertake the greatest amount of joint work and with whom we share the greatest commonality of issues.

4.9 At a meeting between the COSLA portfolio holder and the Depute First Minister in September 2017, the Scottish Government agreed the proposal of the Steering Group with a number of caveats including:

- Education Scotland have a role in the appointment of the Regional Improvement Lead.
- The Improvement Collaboratives in turn collaborate with each other to share best practice and learning to support improvement.
- Timing – that the Collaboratives are “up and running” by the end of October 2017 and that Regional Improvement and Workforce Plans are agreed by end of January 2018.
- Review – that the Scottish Government will engage the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to carry out a rapid policy review of the work of the Collaboratives after 6 months then 12-18 months which would allow for the approach to be developed without legislation.

- 4.10 The above conditions are regarded as absolute and were considered as such when COSLA Leaders considered the proposal in full and agreed it at their meeting of 29 September 2017.
- 4.11 The condition relating to timing is particularly challenging. This has required local authority Chief Executives in conjunction with Council Leaders and Conveners of Education to move forward with the development of a role description for the Regional Improvement Leads and to progress with seeking expressions of interest from existing Directors of Education across the Northern Alliance authorities with a view to interviews being held in the last week in October 2017. At the time of writing a date has not yet been identified however it was agreed that the panel would comprise two Conveners and two Chief Executives from authorities that have no candidate on the interview list. A copy of the draft role description is included at Appendix B to this report.
- 4.12 In addition a Convention of Conveners of Education Group for the Northern Alliance has been formed with Argyll and Bute Council represented by Cllr Yvonne McNeilly, Policy Lead for Education. A draft terms of reference for this group is being drawn up but is not available at the time of writing.

4.13 Further Steps

The Next Steps document had a wider range of proposals for education reform than those related to Improvement Collaboration and the detail of much of this work is still to be developed. The engagement between the Scottish Government with local government is however to be welcomed and it is hoped will continue as the detail of other areas of work are developed. A shared set of aspirations for education is a good starting point however there is a great deal of work to be carried out before the implications of implementation is known. This will be reported to the Community Services Committee as clarity is gained on the Scottish Government's proposals.

There may be resource/staffing implications to contribute to the work of the collaborative however this information is not yet available and will be confirmed the Council once clarification is obtained.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 There is an unprecedented level of change anticipated in the delivery of education services over the next few years which will require consistent and strong leadership of the service. The development of proposals by the Joint Steering Group reflecting the central role of local government in the management and accountability of education and the subsequent agreement by the Scottish Government is a positive development. Nonetheless the timeline condition applied by the Scottish Government has meant that officers in every authority have had to act swiftly to put these arrangements in place given the exceptional circumstances related to this issue.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 Policy | The proposals safeguard the central role and accountability of Argyll and Bute Council for education services whilst participating in an Improvement Collaboration across the Northern Alliance area. |
| 6.2 Financial | The Scottish Government has indicated it will provide £0.038m to the Northern Alliance to assist with the secondment of the Improvement Lead. The balance will be split across the eight partner authorities – an exact figure is not yet available as it will depend on the salary of the successful candidate. |
| 6.3 Legal | The Council has a range of statutory responsibilities in relation to education provision. The proposal for an Improvement Collaborative may not require specific legislation although it is anticipated that a new Education Bill will be presented to parliament this session picking up the other provisions. |
| 6.4 HR | None. |
| 6.5 Equalities | None. |
| 6.6 Risk | A number of risks to the council highlighted in the June 2017 paper are mitigated by the agreement to form Improvement Collaboratives and the incorporation of Argyll and Bute Council within the Northern Alliance. There are a wide range of other risks associated with the other provisions contained in the Next Steps document and these will be reported on as the detailed proposals become clearer. |
| 6.7 Customer Service | None. |

**Cleland Sneddon
Chief Executive**

Councillor Aileen Morton, Council Leader

9 October 2017

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Appendix A

Regional Improvement Collaboratives for Education – Report of the Joint Steering Group (21 September 2017)

Appendix B

Post Description, Improvement Lead, Northern Alliance

REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES FOR EDUCATION

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

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1. Background

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

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

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

2. Purpose

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

3. Scope

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

- **Guiding principles:** Clear guiding principles will be developed and agreed to frame the work of the collaboratives and help to 'operationalise' the policy intentions in the 'Next Steps' document.
- **Functions:** Building on the purpose of the collaboratives as set out in the 'Next Steps' paper (Section 3.1 and 4.1 in Annex A), consider the essential functions that each collaborative must discharge, and the extent to which other functions should be for each collaborative to determine. This will include what needs to be consistent across the collaboratives and where there is scope for regional flexibility in terms of approaches to improvement.

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

4. Process

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

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

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

5. (a) Interim Conclusions: Key Messages

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

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

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

5. (b) Interim Conclusions: Guiding Principles

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

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

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

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

5. (c) Interim Conclusions: Functions

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Take a **regional approach to supporting staffing challenges**, including recruitment and retention; promoting shared approaches to building capacity and securing improvement.
- Work with local authorities and other partners to **support wider collaborative working** across the 'system', including education, social work, health, Community Planning Partnerships and others to ensure that together, 'we get it right for every child'.

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

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

Once regional plans are in place, it will be important for each IC to **simplify and clarify the landscape to avoid any confusion in schools and learning centres**, in terms of where to go for different types of improvement and support. This will be particularly important for headteachers given their changing role and responsibilities, as well as by other professionals, who will need clarity as to what is being provided by the IC, what is being provided by their individual local authority, and essentially where to go for specialist advice.

5. (d) Interim Conclusions: Leadership

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

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

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

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

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

- Whilst there is a strong recognition of the importance and critical contribution of leadership to the work of ICs, since the publication of 'Next Steps' there have been a range of views regarding the model of leadership proposed. This relates to the identification, deployment and accountability of the Regional Directors, as well as to any changes in the statutory responsibilities of Local Government with respect to education.
- Having considered how this might operate, local government colleagues have reflected on current experience and developed a proposal for that top tier of leadership which is intended to address some of those concerns and to secure buy-in, pace, ownership and support from local authorities, ADES and other partners. In this model, the Director role is positioned as a 'Regional Co-ordinator' and is appointed following a nomination by local authority Chief Executives and employed by a Local Authority. The Director would be accountable as senior officer, to the Chief Executives of the constituent local

authorities, as well as providing reports and information to the Chief Inspector of Education. A wider system of local and national reporting could then be developed which allows for local and national democratic accountability for children and families. This type of model is currently being developed in the Northern Alliance and West Partnership.

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

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

5. (e) Interim Conclusions: Staffing

The Steering Group agreed the following:

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

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

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

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

5. (f) Interim Conclusions: Geography

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

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

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

The Steering Group noted the groupings which have been identified by Local Government. Based on this consideration, the Group reflected further on the remit of the Steering Group which was to agree the process for final decision-making. The Group had an initial discussion on the range of factors that will

**need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the final groupings.
They are as follows:**

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

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

5. (g) Interim Conclusions: Accountability

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **Strategic alignment and deliverability** - the role of ICs within the system to ensure alignment from high-level strategy to operational delivery and to bring added value to the delivery of the policy direction of 'Next Steps'.
- **Clarity** - clear agreed goals for multiple agencies and parties, (the system), around children and young people, striving towards commonly held aims (primarily delivering excellence and equity).
- **Simplicity and transparency** - minimal additional bureaucracy and structures.

- **Agility** - each stakeholder's (agency or individual) ability to articulate their place in the whole picture and be an active participant in its success.
- **Support collaboration** - clear process(es) whereby stakeholders can add value to the 'system' and be held to account for their contribution and performance in relation to ICs.

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

The Regional Improvement Lead would be:

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

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

This model is based on the following agreements:

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

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

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

- **The Role of Education Scotland**

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

- **Timing**

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

- **Geography**

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

- **Review**

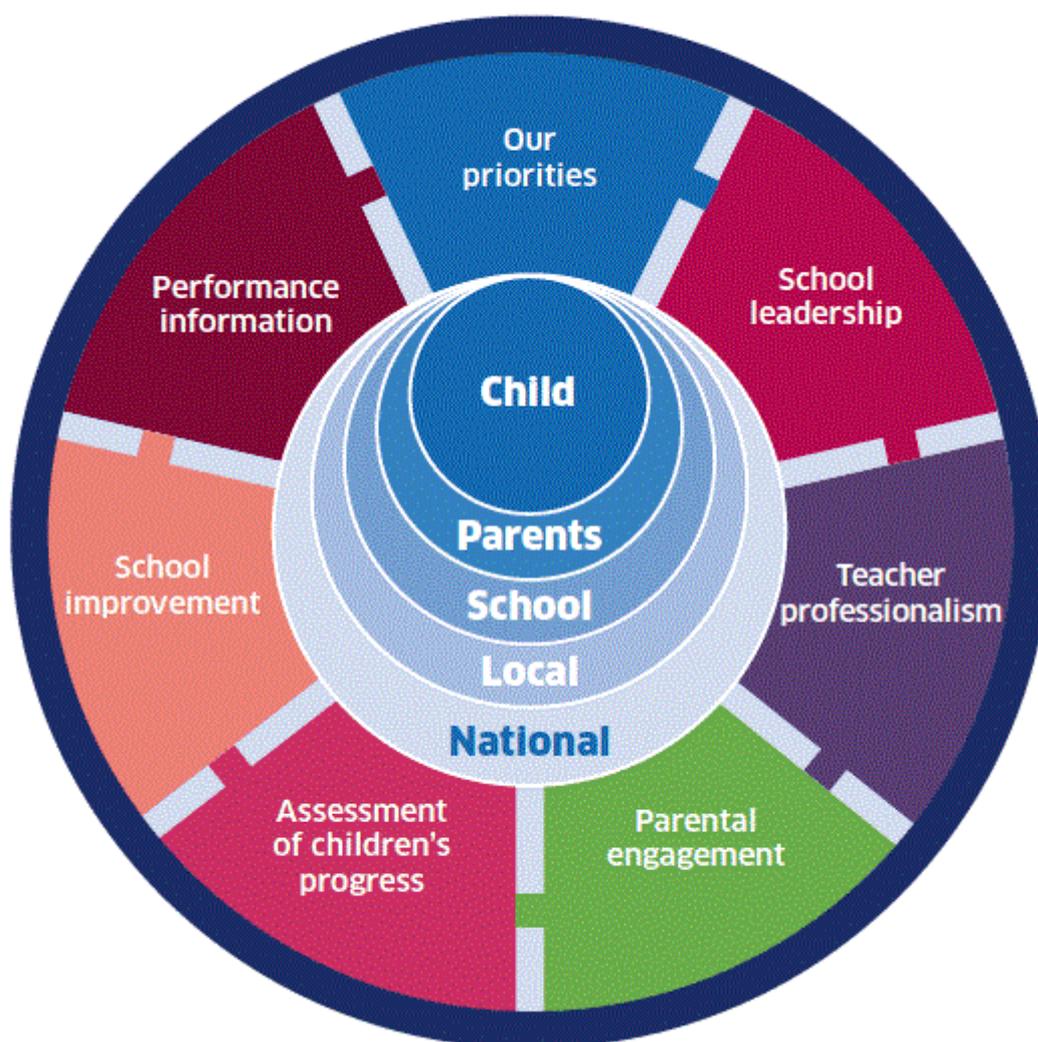
This arrangement will be subject to review. This would involve an independent review when each IC has been in full operation for six months, followed by a more detailed review after 12-18 months. One suggestion is to invite the OECD to conduct a 'rapid review'; this will be explored further, along with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

6. Interim Conclusions: Measures of Success

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Appendix A: Example of Design Principles/ Key Questions

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

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

Appendix B: Current Regional Groupings

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX B



Improvement Lead,

Northern Alliance

Post Description

Title	Regional Improvement Lead, Northern Alliance
Responsible to	Regional Improvement Forum through Chief Executive of the Employing Authority
Responsible for	Administrator Northern Alliance Seconded Staff Northern Alliance
Post Duration	Permanent Subject to Ongoing Annual Review

Remit

The model of the Northern Alliance is one of distributive leadership. The role of the Regional Improvement Lead is to support this model in the following areas:

- (a) Facilitate collaborative working across the region, sharing good practice and sustain partnership approaches.
- (b) Oversee and support the delivery of the strategic plan and policies
- (c) Ensure strategic and operational management and co-ordination and financial accountability
- (d) Take responsibility for good communication for the Northern Alliance, representing the Alliance in forums with Government and other bodies
- (e) Develop a workforce plan to support professional development and practice.

Co-ordinate Improvement by

- (a) Manage and support the development of key strategic improvement activity through the Northern Alliance Strategic Plan. This to include the setting up of reporting and evaluation structures, lead collaboration and support the building of improvement capacity.
- (b) Support the development of the Regional Improvement Forum and Regional Improvement Advisory Forum by ensuring the administration, communication and induction of members of these groups.
- (c) Ensure all projects and interested groups aligned to the Northern Alliance have clear roles and remits, are timetabled and have a reporting mechanism to the Regional Improvement Forum and beyond (if necessary).
- (d) Be mindful of national and international developments and ensure these are considered by the Regional Improvement Framework.
- (e) Work with individual authorities to ensure that the “improvement offer” is relevant and appropriate to schools and services.
- (f) Support effective liaison and improvement activity with Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.
- (g) Support Northern Alliance colleagues in workforce development by co-ordinating, developing and implementing a workforce plan.

Ensure Effective Management & Coordination by

- (a) Appoint, manage and ensure an administrative service to the Northern Alliance
- (b) Ensure all working arrangements for the Northern Alliance are in place for the Regional Improvement Forum, Regional Improvement Advisory Forum Convention of Conveners
- (c) Work with Northern Alliance Directors to ensure there is accountability to both Scottish Government and constituent Local Authorities through good management and working arrangements and financial probity
- (d) Support the scrutiny of the work of the Northern Alliance by ensuring there are appropriate Management Information Systems.

Take responsibility for Communication by

- (a) Act as first point of contact for the Northern Alliance with Scottish Government, Education Scotland and other bodies
- (b) Ensure there is a contact name for Directors, projects and areas of enquiry with the Scottish Government.
- (c) Support Directors in having swift communication and decision making within the Northern Alliance structures.
- (d) Liaise with outside bodies and partners to ensure, through the structure of the Northern Alliance, transparent governance and accountability.

Drafted October 2017

NA Directors