

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

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education Operational Delivery Committee of the further development of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2).
- 1.2 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:
- Note the progress of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 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.

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## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education Operational Delivery Committee of the further development of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2).

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:
- Note the progress of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 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.

## **4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Each RIC was asked by a joint Steering Group, consisting of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Local Government 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].
- 4.3 The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2) was submitted to the Community Services Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018.

The Committee resolved to note the content of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2); and to endorse the work of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative. The Plan was submitted to Education Scotland on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 and signed off by the HM Chief Inspector of Education/Chief Executive of Education Scotland on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

- 4.4 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 the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 to Education Scotland. The Scottish Government on 2<sup>nd</sup> 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).
  - 4.5 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.
  - 4.6 To date the Northern Alliance continues to make sounds progress. Argyll and Bute Council Officers are taking an effective role in the strategic direction of the Northern Alliance. Representation on the workstreams is being developed.
- **Emerging Literacy workstream:**
    - 20 schools in Argyll and Bute are involved in the workstream.
    - School support consists of initial whole-day training (for new schools) and six network sessions throughout the year (for all schools).
    - 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.
    - Practitioners have access to online resources to support the observation/ assessment of and planning for learning in early literacy, language and communication.
    - Practitioners have access to and are signposted to online training resources which can be used as part of whole-school CPD.
    - There is an Early Level Literacy and English progression framework linked to the Benchmarks. This is being woven into the network sessions.
    - 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.
    - Argyll and Bute PT for Literacy is and effective member of this workstream and is driving forward this work.

- **Numeracy workstream:**
  - NA Numeracy Progression completed and made available to schools July 18 (Early, First, Second).
  - General agreement that each LA follows its own path, subsequently sharing what has worked.
  - Baseline collected from P3 and P4s in Dec'17 using Gloss assessments.
  
- **1 +2 Modern Languages workstream:**
  - Developing 1+2 in secondary BGE – building on last year's Scotland wide languages roadshows and sharing and comparing models across authorities.
  - Started to share NA models and strategic documents to support schools.
  - Planning development of sustainable training to meet the varying needs of primary teachers.
  - Gathering of authority strategies to identify baseline of activity (using Govt Survey responses and Insight data to establish current picture and measuring improvement).
  - Identification of key workstreams for 1+2 this session including P1-S3 entitlement, DYW/business links, Transition, CLPL.
  - 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.
  - 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 LA.
  - Link in with Emerging Literacy to explore interdependencies.
  
- **Leadership Development workstream:**
  - Development group est. with all NA LAs 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.
- **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. Kathleen Johnston, Education Officer Argyll and Bute is in post as Improvement Advisor.
    - A NA brief for infrastructure projects has been delivered. All other improvement plan actions are ongoing.
    - Individual meetings with LAs to discuss progress/challenges with delivering the expansion.
    - Representing NA at National ELC Partnership Forum.
    - Anne Paterson Head of Education: Life Long Learning and support is the project lead for this workstream.
  - **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.
    - 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:**
    - The Northern Alliance is evaluating the aforementioned workstreams to consider whether it would be more effective to merge the two programmes.
    - The collaborative is also reviewing group membership and looking to identify a sponsor and lead for Children's Services.
  - **E-learning workstream:**
    - Shetland Islands' Council and Highland Regional Council have appointed staff to the e-Sgoil Management Team.
    - The team is currently standardising policies, practices and procedures in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that inter-authority delivery is as efficient and streamline as possible: QA procedures

Internet Safety Policy e-Learning  
Pupil, School and e-Sgoil Contract  
E-Sgoil Handbook  
E-Sgoil Improvement Plan

- Working group to develop digital learning pedagogy.
- Working closely with the GTC and EIS to ensure that all practices and documentation comply with national guidelines and agreements.

- **Future Delivery Models**

- The Sustaining Education in Communities Conference was held on 14<sup>th</sup> 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:**

- 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.

4.7 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.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 Argyll and Bute Education Service is committed to the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative and is playing an important part in the work of the Collaborative. The additional funding will enable all of the partners within the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative to contribute to the delivery of the plan.

5.2 Additional updates will be reported to the Community Service Committee.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy Scottish Government have expectation that Regional Improvement Collaboratives will be established as a key driver in improving Scottish Education

6.2 Financial The grant of £1,086,067 made by the Scottish Government to the Northern Alliance is to be used for the purposes of the Programme and for no other purpose. The funding will be drawn down in March 2019.

- 6.3 Legal There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations of this report.
- 6.4 HR The collaborative has sought to ensure equitable resource allocation across the region. The workforce/resource bid, which was submitted to Education Scotland, resulting in a grant of over £1million (approx.) will enhance the capacity of the RIC to deliver. The RIC will also develop joint working protocols and continuously review the workforce allocation.
- 6.5 Equalities: The Northern Alliance is utilising a range of platforms to enable collaboration across borders and boundaries. Many of the workstreams are adopting, Glow, Google as well as using Vscene for video conferencing and sharing documents.
- 6.6 Risk The grant offer and associated arrangements may make it challenge to provide a progress update before the end of the year given it was early November that the Northern Alliance has been notified of the allocation from the Scottish Government. The grant offer and associated arrangements may make it challenge to provide a progress update before the end of the year given it was early November that the Northern Alliance has been notified of the allocation from the Scottish Government.
- 6.7 Customer Service The collaborative is redeveloping their website to ensure it is user friendly and profiles the work of the Northern Alliance. The collaborative has also devised a communications strategy to engage schools, Head Teachers, Teachers and other key stakeholders, including young people and their parents.

**Anne Paterson**  
**Head of Education: Lifelong Learning & Support**

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly**  
**Policy Lead – Education and Lifelong Learning**

**For further information contact:**

Anne Paterson  
Head of Education: Lifelong Learning and Support  
Email: [anne.paterson@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:anne.paterson@argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01546 604333