

**SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

---

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This paper provides the Committee with an update on the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) which is supported by funding through the Attainment Scotland Fund, the aims of which are to address the challenges of the poverty-related attainment gap.
- 1.2 The Attainment Scotland Fund is made up of a number of funding streams totalling £1billion. This targeted funding includes the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) and Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) which Argyll and Bute receive and will be the focus of this paper.
- 1.3 The paper will include an overview of the 2022-23 Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding allocations for Argyll and Bute schools eligible to receive PEF funding (Appendix 1), the draft authority 'core' stretch aims (Appendix 2) and an overview of the planned SEF spend.

## SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

---

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge, launched in March 2022, does not introduce a new policy but rather builds on the existing policy that has been in place since 2015. The main aim of the policy is to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 2.2 The policy's mission is to *'use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap'*.
- 2.3 A new requirement by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is that all local authorities set out 'stretch aims' as detailed in their guidance [Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress](#). This includes 5 'core' aims and an additional 'plus' aim. This paper will detail the process the Education Service has taken in developing these stretch aims and the current draft stretch aims.
- 2.4 £1 billion of funding has been committed by the Scottish Government over the current parliamentary term to support the realisation of this policy. This is delivered through a number of funding streams including; Strategic Equity Funding, Pupil Equity Funding and Care Experienced Children and Young People funding.
- 2.5 This paper provides the Committee with updated information on the continued intention of the Scottish Government, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, to disperse £1,366,800 in Pupil Equity Funding and £142,162 in Strategic Equity Funding for the 2022-23 session.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Community Services Committee notes:

- a) The update on 2022 Scottish Government Pupil Equity and Strategic Equity Funding.
- b) The provision of strategic guidance at Scottish Government and Authority levels to support the implementation of the Pupil Equity Funding and Strategic Equity Funding.
- c) The draft stretch aims developed as required by the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- d) That further updates on the Scottish Attainment Challenge will be presented to a future meeting of the Community Services Committee.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

4.1 The first five years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge saw progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap across Scotland. With the disruption to learning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen an impact on attainment of children, with those affected by poverty impacted at disproportionately higher levels.

4.2 The Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework) aims to:

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes by tackling the poverty-related attainment gap;
- Set high expectations through annual, locally identified stretch aims to ensure progress in recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Build on the investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to make a greater difference, more quickly for children and young people;
- Build consistency on processes used across the country to build a more accurate national picture;
- Drive improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty;
- Ensure elements of local planning and decision making while driving strategic direction.

4.3 The mission of the Framework is to contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people recognising the importance of attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing. The 'core plus' model of stretch aims reflects this.

- 4.4 All Local Authorities are expected to set stretch aims for the following five measures and report on these annually to Scottish Government. Draft aims currently in development are contained in Appendix 2.
- a) achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined);
  - b) the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication;
  - c) the proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the “Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations” publication;
  - d) the proportion of 16-19 olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland; and
  - e) a locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets.
- 4.5 In setting the authority ‘core’ stretch aims close, collaborative work has been undertaken with the authority’s link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and officers across the central education team. This included examining national and local data across the identified core aims to develop a realistic and ambitious target for 2022-2023. A focus group of school leaders, including representation from professional associations, were consulted regarding these draft aims and further refinements were made. A further virtual consultation was offered to all Head Teachers and feedback was gathered to improve the draft core aims. Those Head Teachers unable to attend were able to access the presentation and feedback via a survey link.
- 4.6 An additional ‘plus’ aim is included in the model with authorities choosing an aim specific to their own context and datasets. The aim needs to detail:
- What is the change for learners?
  - How much change?
  - Who is target group?
  - By when?
  - How will be tracked and measured?
- 4.7 Officers are currently working collaboratively with the authority’s link Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and the Educational Psychology team to identify a measure within the strong work already taking place across a number of schools in regards to the programme ‘Our Children Their Nurturing Education’.
- 4.8 Alongside the authority stretch aims, developed to closely interrogate the reduction of the poverty-related attainment gap, schools who are eligible will continue to receive Pupil Equity Funding for the remainder of this parliamentary session. Reportable school level allocations are reported in **Appendix 1**.

- 4.9 Schools are allocated PEF funding directly and this is to be used to provide targeted support for children and young people (and their families if appropriate) affected by poverty. School leaders plan for the use of Pupil Equity Funding through the existing School Improvement Planning processes which includes a template for reporting on expenditure, outcomes and measures for PEF funding.
- 4.10 National Operational Guidance is provided by the Scottish Government to support school leaders in the use of PEF. This national guidance is further supported by the Argyll and Bute PEF information framework which further details processes, procedures and good practice in effective and targeted use of PEF.
- 4.11 Head Teachers report annual through their Standards and Quality Reports the impact of the use of PEF within their school.
- 4.12 A significant change in the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge is that the elements of Schools Programme schools and Challenge Authorities has been replaced with Strategic Equity Funding. Previously additional funding was allocated to authorities with high levels of deprivation through the Challenge Authority funding, Argyll and Bute did not receive any Challenge Authority funding. Some schools with high levels of deprivation received additional funding through the Schools Programme funding, Argyll and Bute had one School, Rosneath Primary, which received this funding. The Strategic Equity Fund now replaces both of these previous funds and sees all 32 local authorities receiving a proportion of funding. Argyll and Bute will receive £142,162 for session 2022-2023 through SEF funding.
- 4.13 Planning for the spend of SEF funding for the first year's allocation includes continued funding for the Lead Teacher Recovery and Renewal – Literacy and Numeracy, an allocation of funding for those schools that do not receive PEF funding and can demonstrate a poverty related attainment gap and support for the transition of our Schools Programme school with the removal of the Schools Programme funding previously received.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge and associated funding streams focuses on and accelerates targeted improvement activity to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. It is also intended to support and complement the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their full potential.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – Attainment Scotland Funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government and the delivery of national outcomes. Supporting delivery on the Long Term Outcomes 3 and 4.

- 6.2 Financial – Potential financial implications given the limited nature of funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded.
- 6.3 Legal – The Council requires to meet their statutory duties as prescribed in the ‘Standards in Scotland’s etc., Act 2000’
- 6.4 HR – Potential HR implications given the time limited nature of the funding in ensuring the avoidance of ongoing HR liabilities or redundancy costs which are unfunded.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – The Scottish Attainment Challenge is aimed at reducing inequalities.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty -
  - 6.5.3 Islands - none
- 6.6 Climate Change - none
- 6.7 Risk – Potential reputational risk to the Council by failing to deliver the statutory requirements of the revisions arising within the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc., Act 2000.
- 6.8 Customer Service – none

**Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education**

**Councillor Yvonne McNeilly – Policy Lead for Education**

30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**For further information contact:**

Simone McAdam  
Education Manager – Performance and Improvement  
Simone.McAdam@argyll-bute.gov.uk

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Pupil Equity Fund allocations 2022-23

Appendix 2 – Argyll and Bute Draft Stretch Aims 2022-23