

South East Alliance

South East Improvement Collaborative
Collaboration to Deliver Excellence and Equity

South East Alliance Members:

Edinburgh City Council
East Lothian Council
Midlothian Council
Fife Council
Scottish Borders Council

Background

South East Alliance (SEA)

The existing South East Alliance partnership, (Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and Scottish Borders) have already been engaged in planning collaborative activity to support development work across the 4 local authority areas. Previous work developed is attached as appendix 1. Some of this existing work will be included as part of the Delivery plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative and some may sit as pieces of work that will be delivered as part of the South East Alliance partnership eg delivery of 1140hours of Early Learning and Childcare.

The South East Alliance has now included Fife and have begun plans for a Regional Improvement Collaborative with a focus on Quality Improvement and Raising Attainment. The South East Improvement Collaborative focus on Quality Improvement and Raising Attainment allows some existing work and any future work (eg the skills agenda as part of the Edinburgh City Deal) to be developed as part of the South East Alliance partnership.

The progress and outcomes of the Delivery Plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative will be reported to Education Scotland, other work carried out as part of the South East Alliance partnership will be reported to relevant groups such as City Deal Board or ELC regional structures.

South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)

The Scottish Government published its Education Governance: Next steps paper in June 2017, in response to the Delivery Plan and Consultation document Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence in education and subsequent wide ranging consultation.

The Next Steps paper makes it clear that enhanced regional collaboration between education authorities will be a feature of future arrangements. COSLA, working with SOLACE and ADES, reviewed existing regional education collaborations across Scotland with a view to identifying a collective local government proposal on cross boundary collaboration. Each of these Regional Improvement Collaboratives would meet the strategic aims of the Delivery Plan and requirements for local authority accountability.

This offers the South East Alliance the opportunity to develop a vision for our South East Improvement Collaborative that is inclusive of our headteachers and schools to deliver excellence and equity on a regional basis. As the South East Alliance all local authorities are signed up to the key principles outlined within the Next Steps paper. Following these principles will allow a partnership approach in delivering the relevant aspects of the Edinburgh City Deal as well as the expectations detailed in the Next Steps document. The South East Alliance will not succeed in reducing inequity without a holistic approach across Children's Services. The wider Getting it Right for

Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda is of crucial importance when tackling inequalities and closing the attainment gap.

This document is intended to outline how we could use the South East Alliance to create a South East Improvement Collaborative Improvement (SEIC) with the function to:

- raise attainment and achievement
- help to deliver excellence and equity
- develop work related to GIRFEC and tackling attainment inequity
- share expertise across the Collaborative to effect change
- maintain local democratic accountability
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy
- contribute to relevant Edinburgh City Deal outcomes

Context for the Development of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)

Local Outcome Improvement Planning

In July 2015 the Community Empowerment Act and related legislation came into force requiring each Community Planning Partnership to have a coherent plan that will empower and support local communities even down to a neighbourhood level. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan may take account of the Council Plan or there may in some instances still be both. As a large part of each local authority, Education must play a central role in the development and delivery of the LOIP as part of the Community Planning Partnership.

Children's Services Planning

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is a key part of the Scottish Government's desire to make Scotland the best place to grow up. It is underpinned by the Scottish Government's continued commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the GIRFEC approach.

The Act aims to ensure that planning and delivery of services are integrated, focussed on securing quality and value, based on a preventative approach, dedicated to promoting, supporting and safeguarding children and young people's wellbeing.

Plans for each Community Planning Partnership are to be published for a three year period starting in April 2017 setting out how outcomes are to be improved for children and young people. An annual report on progress is to be published.

National Improvement Framework

In December 2016 the Scottish Government published the 2017 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan for Education, which are

designed to deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity with a focus on four priorities:

- improving attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- improving children and young people's health and wellbeing; and,
- improving employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

The NIF also recognises the importance of six drivers for improvement:

- School leadership;
- Teacher professionalism;
- Parental engagement;
- Assessment of children's progress;
- School improvement; and,
- Performance information.

Education Governance

On 15th June 2017, the Deputy First Minister published the government's response to the Governance Review, focusing on the empowerment of schools and communities to deliver excellence and equity for all learners. The main thrust of the document is to empower headteachers to make more localised decisions on learning and teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of their communities. In addition, the document states that up to seven Regional Improvement Collaboratives will be created.

Regional Improvement Collaboratives will:

- 1) *Provide excellent educational improvement support for headteachers, teachers and practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals. These teams will draw on Education Scotland staff, local authority staff and others;*
- 2) *Provide coherent focus across all partners through delivery of an annual regional plan and associated work programme aligned with the National Improvement Framework;*
- 3) *Facilitate collaborative working across the region, including sharing best practice, supporting collaborative networks and pursuing partnership approaches; and*
- 4) *Be led by a Regional Director, to be appointed by the Scottish Government and report to the HM Chief Inspector/Chief Executive of Education Scotland.*

Education Governance: Next Steps

In its *Education Governance: Next Steps* paper, Scottish Government indicates that Regional Improvement Collaboratives should align their plans with the Priorities and Key Drivers set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF):

The SEIC is committed to the key drivers within the National Improvement Framework and the planning and reporting cycles as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The SEIC will identify and work on areas where collaboration will enhance each individual education authority's existing and future plans to implement the priorities and key drivers as outlined in the NIF. The SEIC also recognises the role of headteachers, teachers and parents in an empowered and collaborative approach to improving educational outcomes for our children and young people.

Focus for SEIC Delivery Plan

The priorities, key drivers and aims sit well with possible future work and indeed areas where some work has already taken place. In order to be able to have a clear focus and measure the impact of our work we have agreed two areas as an initial focus:

- 1) Improving Attainment and Achievement, including closing the attainment gap
- 2) Quality Improvement in Schools and Early Years settings

1. Improving Attainment and Achievement, including closing the attainment gap

Improving attainment and achievement is a key driver for all improvement work in school communities. Within SEIC we would wish to look at ways to improve attainment and achievement for all, ensuring that our children and young people are best placed to access a positive and sustained destination on leaving school leading to good life outcomes.

SEIC offers schools and early years' settings the opportunity to be part of, and benefit from, work streams linked to NIF key drivers that will focus on:

- professional learning and leadership development (**teacher professionalism**)
- how to engage parents, particularly from areas of deprivation and those that are hard to reach, in their child's learning (**parental engagement**)
- using data related to closing the attainment gap to maximum advantage (**performance information**)
- ensure effectiveness for the use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) resources (**school leadership**)
- share research and evidence-based practice to inform programmes of work (**school improvement**)
- the formation of specialist curriculum support (**teacher professionalism**)

- assessment and moderation of CfE levels (**assessment of children's progress**)

In order to develop our Regional Improvement Collaborative we require to:

- create a culture where our headteachers, teachers and parents embrace the responsibility of continuous improvement in schools, across clusters and on a regional basis
- develop a joint programme of professional learning based on developing teacher professionalism, professional enquiry and school leadership
- share practice in family learning to secure parental engagement in children's learning as well as parental involvement in schools
- share ways of preparing data and analysing data relating to vulnerable groups
- moderate PEF/SAC plans including PEF/SAC spend and sharing practice through peer review opportunities
- provide opportunities to share research outcomes and outcomes from Improvement Collaborative work
- establish specialist curriculum teams from central and school based staff which will offer support and professional learning to bring about improvements in curriculum delivery and learning and teaching.

Quality Improvement in Schools and Early Years' Settings

As stated in the Education Governance: Next Steps paper, local authorities will retain the duty to support schools to continuously improve. SEIC offers schools the collective opportunity to look inwards, outwards and forwards, as described in HGIOS?4, and will support and challenge schools and early years settings through:

- approaches to self-evaluation and quality improvement which improve outcomes (**school leadership**)
- use of data to secure continuous improvement (**performance information**)
- support and guidance on improvement planning in line with NIF (**school improvement**)

Each of the above will enhance and complement individual local education authority's existing practices and plans for Quality Improvement as well as building a sustainable model for the future. It will also build on partnerships and collaborations across schools encouraging a delivery model for improvement and accountability that will be the responsibility of the school to deliver.

In order to develop our Regional Improvement Collaborative we require to:

- identify resources available within each authority, across the region and in Education Scotland which will offer support and challenge to schools
- develop a proportionate formula to secure equity for each local authority
- build on each local authority's approaches to continuous improvement and self-evaluation and develop a SEIC plan to offer support and challenge to schools and early years settings
- offer opportunities for school improvement collaboratives across SEIC to share best practice and learning between and amongst schools and early years settings
- explore how best to engage children and young people in improving services
- identify and utilise available data analysis already in use, both quantitative and qualitative, to help drive improvement
- ensure engagement and ownership of headteachers to deliver improvement at a school, cluster and regional level
- develop a plan for SEIC to address continuous improvement.

Method of Delivery

We will ensure that our work produces collective added value through:

- Increased capacity to directly support in a targeted way
- Increased knowledge of a critical mass of staff to be focussed on specific areas to make a difference
- Using the expertise of a wide range of headteachers, deputies, principal teachers and teachers
- Making best use of the most effective systems from across the SEIC
- Sharing solutions to reduce bureaucracy

Examples of delivery of collective improvement through:

- the use of our expertise from across the region, including headteachers and teachers, to make best use of data analysis from the new national standardised assessments through a SEIC forum on assessment
- facilitating the delivery of a series of seminars/engagement sessions to allow for the sharing of best practice across schools, clusters and the regional area in closing the attainment gap
- developing with headteachers, teachers and parents support, guidance and practical advice on engaging parents in their child's learning
- establishing a culture of Peer Learning/Peer Review (schools pairing or clustering to quality assure across their group of schools) within the SEIC where headteachers take the lead role
- establishing a regional senior phase forum with school staff, specialists, employers and colleges
- developing school partnerships to evaluate the impact of PEF/SAC plans with a view to supporting the reporting cycle on the PEF/SAC and Improvement Planning; and

- providing an online forum to share research findings from practitioner inquiry and improvement collaborative tests of change.

Governance and Reporting

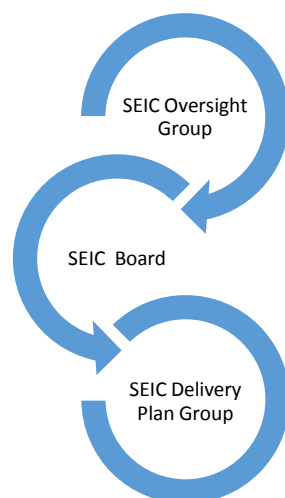
In addition to the priority areas, at the Deputy First Minister's request, the Council also made some recommendations around the issue of governance. The Council felt that it was important to consider how to de-clutter the system without damaging it. The Council advised against becoming too focussed on changing the structure of the education system when, arguably, the more important aspects are the culture and capacity within the system. In particular the Scottish Government should:

- Learn from existing attempts to formally share education services between local authorities e.g. the Northern Alliance, and other forms of non-structural regionalisation that have been successful internationally.
- Create learning hubs around the country where education professionals can go to learn about different elements of educational practice.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS
July 2017

Getting governance right is imperative. It is vital to retain local democratic accountability whilst at the same time bringing together the key representatives involved in decision-making across the SEIC. The 3 groups of personnel as seen below would provide the relevant staff to drive improvement across the 'region' and provide accountability for the work of SEIC.

The South East Improvement Collaborative Governance



SEIC Oversight Group would comprise Education Conveners/portfolio holders x 5 and CEOs x 5. It is envisaged this group would only meet once or twice per year to oversee the work of SEIC as part of the political accountability.

The SEIC Board would be formed with Directors of Education or equivalent x 5, Headteachers x 5 and National Bodies (ES, SDS, Colleges). The SEIC Board would appoint a Chair. The SEIC Board will also approve the SEIC plans and receive reports on the progress of the plan and its impact. This will be the key officer leadership group, agreeing areas for priorities for collaboration, commissioning workstreams and receiving reports from workstream leads. It will meet quarterly with the first meeting in each new financial year considering progress with previous work and setting new priorities for the coming academic session, as well as overseeing the formulation of the SEIC Plan.

SEIC Delivery Plan Group will accept commission from the SEIC Board. Officers, headteachers and teachers will collaborate to undertake specific tasks, with Heads of Service, senior officers or Head Teachers taking the lead as appropriate to levels of expertise and need. Such delivery groups will meet as appropriate to address and deliver the commissioned tasks from workstreams within the SEIC Plans.

Importantly the work of each local education authority will continue to be overseen through existing governance arrangements, maintaining local government accountability for the delivery of education services to each community and local authority area.

The SEIC Board may be chaired by the 'Regional Lead Officer' or a nominated member of the group. This post should be appointed by Chief Executives of the SEIC from among the existing Directors/Heads of Service in the five local authorities. This would not be a substantive position but would be a leadership role for a fixed term. The Regional Lead Officer (RLO) will also report to the Chief Executive of Education Scotland on the outcomes of the SEIC Board decisions.

The support for the RLO would be agreed by Chief Executives and may take different forms dependent on existing structures and agreed priority workstreams. Additional resource could be added if available to support the co-ordination and delivery of the SEIC Plan.

Discussions would need to take place with Education Scotland to consider the best way in which they could support the Partnership. For example, this could be through a link senior officer, similar to their Area Lead Officer role. Rather than having the Partnership linking with up to five Area Lead Officers, there would be one Education Scotland appointee who would provide the Partnership with direct support.

These arrangements would also provide a platform for the potential development of self-evaluation and improvement work in wider children's services particularly where there is a close connection to school attainment such as with outcomes for looked after children. A more holistic GIRFEC approach would be beneficial in tackling the attainment gap and reducing inequity.

Proposed Measures to Evaluate Impact

Short-term measures required for implementation of action plan to be decided to help have a focus for value added impact in first 6 months.

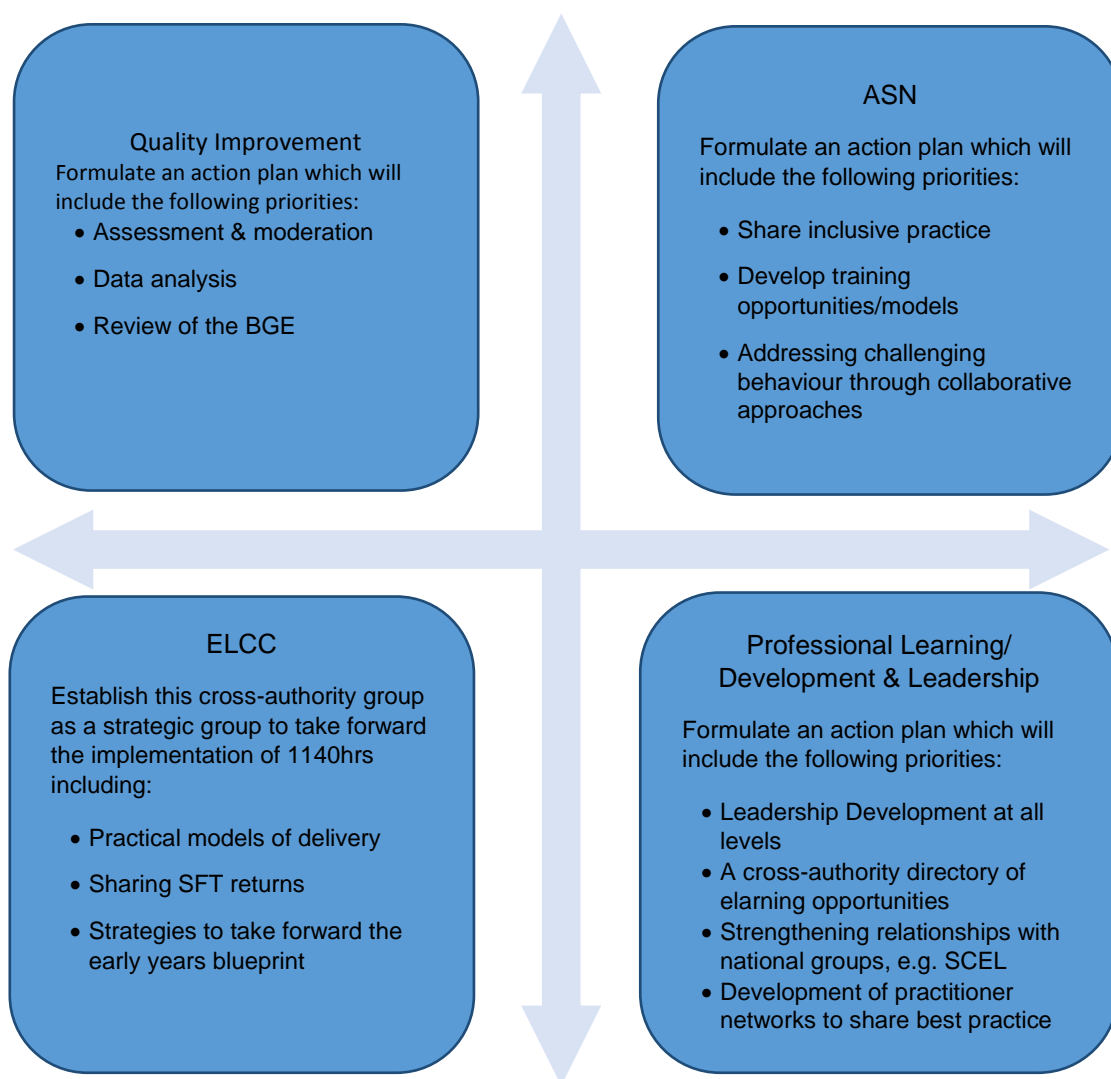
Improvement:

- Improved approaches to self-evaluation and managing change as measured by ES school inspections and local authority visits
- Effective Improvement plans in place
- Positive evaluations of events to share good practice across SEIC
- Number of schools involved in Learning Partnerships (schools that partner to support and challenge each other)

Attainment and Achievement including closing the attainment gap

- Number of schools engaged in moderating and evaluating PEF Plans and reports as part of a School Partnership
- Increase in number of pieces of research undertaken across the SEIC to inform practice
- Increase in CfE attainment across the SEIC
- Reduction in CfE attainment gap between the least and most deprived
- Increase in SQA performance across the SEIC
- Reduction in SQA performance gap between the least and most deprived
- Increase in % of positive school leaver destinations
- Reduction in gap between the most and least deprived for SLD

South East Alliance



South East Scotland Improvement Collaborative Overview of Key Data

Data on Deprivation

Registration for Free School Meals (FMR)

Table 1. Percentage of primary pupils registered for free school meals (FMR)

Local Authority	2006	2017 P4-P7	Long Term Trend	Rank 2017 P4-P7	Quartile 2017 P4-P7
East Lothian	11.6	9.9	-1.7	25	Top Q4
Edinburgh, City of	18.7	13.1	-5.6	19	Middle Q3
Fife	18.7	20.7	2.0	7	Bottom Q1
Midlothian	13.0	16.2	3.2	16	Bottom Q2
Scottish Borders ¹	9.5	11.9	2.4	23	Bottom Q3
Scotland	17.9	17.5	-0.4		

Table 2. Percentage of secondary pupils registered for free school meals (FMR)

Local Authority	2006	2017	Long Term Trend	Rank 2017	Quartile 2017
East Lothian	8.3	8.1	-0.2	25	Top Q4
Edinburgh, City of	13.2	10.2	-3.0	20	Middle Q3
Fife	14.4	17.0	2.6	7	Bottom Q1
Midlothian	8.1	12.9	4.8	13	Middle Q2
Scottish Borders	6.2	10.2	4.0	20	Middle Q3
Scotland	13.5	14.1	0.6		

- Very different rates of deprivation in the five authorities.
- Fife more deprived than Scotland. Midlothian close to Scotland. Other authorities less deprived than Scotland.
- Levels of deprivation declining in Edinburgh and East Lothian (slightly), but increasing in Fife, Scottish Borders and (particularly) Mid Lothian

Source: Summary Statistics for attainment, leaver destinations and healthy living (Scottish Government, June 2017)

Child Poverty (HMRC local measure)

Table 3. Percentage of children living in child poverty (HMRC local measure)

Local Authority	% of Children in low-income families		Rank		Quartile
	Under 16	Under 20	Under 16	Under 20	
East Lothian	14.1%	13.8%	22	22	Middle Q3
Edinburgh, City of	17.0%	16.8%	17	17	Top Q3
Fife	19.8%	19.4%	9	9	Top Q2
Midlothian	18.7%	18.2%	12	12	Middle Q2
Scottish Borders	14.4%	14.0%	19	19	Middle Q3
Scotland	18.6%	18.4%			

- Different rates of child poverty in the five authorities, ranging from top of quartile 2 (more deprived) to middle of quartile 3 (less deprived).
- Fife more deprived than Scotland. Midlothian close to Scotland. Other authorities less deprived than Scotland.

Source: Children in low-income households local measure: 2014 (HMRC, September 2016)

Data on the Costs of Children's Services

Table 5. School costs (LGBF indicators CHN1 and CHN2)

Local Authority	Primary school costs				Secondary school costs			
	CHN1 2010-11	CHN1 2015-16	Change	Rank 2015-16	CHN2 2010-11	CHN2 2015-16	Change	Rank 2015-16
East Lothian	4597.68	4343.98	-253.70	5	5787.46	6260.54	473.08	3
Edinburgh City	4436.31	4278.40	-157.91	4	6536.89	6316.19	-220.70	6
Fife	4996.03	4425.48	-570.55	8	5834.93	6435.07	600.14	8
Midlothian	4679.35	4649.97	-29.38	13	6163.71	6298.73	135.02	5
Scottish Borders	4819.00	4753.50	-65.50	14	6388.08	6580.37	192.29	12
Scotland	4868.33	4743.73	-124.60		6421.88	6729.30	307.42	

- Costs of schools in both the primary and secondary sectors are relatively low by national standards, for all four authorities (all costs are in quartile 1, except the Midlothian primary school cost which is mid quartile 2)

Source: Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2015-16 (Improvement Service, 2017)

PEF Amounts

	Total Allocation	School Allocations
East Lothian		
Edinburgh, City of	7,470,000	4800 to 223,200
Fife	9,787,200	1200 to 302,400
Midlothian	2,272,800	4,800 to 138,000
Scottish Borders	1,840,800	1200 to 130,000

Data on the Scale of the School System

Table 4. Comparison of numbers of schools and pupils, and of average school size

Local Authority	Pupils			
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
East Lothian	8,492	5,612	0	14,104
Edinburgh City	29,745	18,145	635	48,525
Fife	29,126	19,896	133	49,155
Midlothian	7,271	4,987	120	12,378
Scottish Borders	8,171	6,392	0	14,563
All local authorities	396,237	280,408	6,528	683,173

- Numbers of pupils similar in East Lothian/Midlothian/Scottish Borders and in Fife/Edinburgh
- Approximately four times as many pupils in Fife/Edinburgh as in East Lothian/Midlothian/Scottish Borders

Local Authority	Schools			
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
East Lothian	35	6	0	41
Edinburgh City	88	23	12	123
Fife	135	18	9	162
Midlothian	32	6	2	40
Scottish Borders	61	9	2	72
All local authorities	2,030	358	134	2,522

Local Authority	Average School Size (Pupils per School)			
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
East Lothian	243	935	0	344
Edinburgh City	338	789	53	395
Fife	216	1105	15	303
Midlothian	227	831	60	309
Scottish Borders	134	710	0	202
All local authorities	195	783	49	271

- Scottish Borders has the smallest average school size in both primary and secondary sectors. Both figures are below the Scottish average.
- The average school size for the other four authorities is larger than the Scottish average, both for the primary and secondary sectors

Source: Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland (Scottish Government, December 2016)