

Scottish Government Consultation Response - Education Reform: A Consultation on the provisions of the Education Bill

Report by Fiona Robertson Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Council is requested to delegate authority to the Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships to submit the Education Reform Consultation Response to the Scottish Government, on behalf of Midlothian Council.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise Council on the consultation on the provisions of the Education Bill and how key stakeholders have informed the response on behalf of Midlothian Council.

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3 Background

- 3.1** On 7 November 2023 the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills launched a consultation on the provisions of the Education Bill. The closing date for consultation responses is 18 December 2023.
- 3.2** The consultation paper specifically focuses on the new qualifications body and new approaches to inspection. It seeks views on the proposals to replace SQA and approaches to maximise the role inspection plays in improving education in Scotland.
- 3.3** The intention is to deliver bodies that are fit for future and able to respond to the evolving education and skills landscape.
- 3.4** The consultation seeks the views of individuals, groups or organisations. Respondents are asked to identify their role in the education system (i.e. parent, practitioner, support, child, employer, local authority) and which sector they represent (early years, primary, secondary, FE/HE).
- 3.5** The consultation contains proposals which it seeks the views on. The questions are outlined below:
 - 3.5.1 What changes should we consider in terms of how qualifications are developed and delivered that you think would improve outcomes for Scotland's pupils and students?
 - 3.5.2 How best can we ensure that the views of our teaching professionals are taken into account appropriately within the new qualifications body, and do these proposals enable this?
 - 3.5.3 How best can we ensure that the views of pupils, students and other learners are appropriately represented within the new qualifications body, and do these proposals enable this?
 - 3.5.4 How can we ensure qualifications being offered in Scotland are reliable, of a high standard and fit for purpose?
 - 3.5.5 How do you think the qualifications body can best work with others across the education and skills system to deliver better outcomes for all?
 - 3.5.6 Do you agree with the purposes set out? Is there anything in addition you would like to see included?
 - 3.5.7 Do you agree or disagree with the range of establishments to be inspected by HM Inspectors of Education? Is there anything you would like to add or change?
 - 3.5.8 Do you have any specific comments on the role of the inspectorate of education in the inspection of publicly funded colleges, initial teacher education, early learning and childcare and or modern apprenticeships?
 - 3.5.9 Do you agree or disagree with the priorities set out? Is there anything in addition that you would like to see the inspection cover?
 - 3.5.10 Do you have a view on these options for establishing the new approach to inspection?
 - 3.5.11 Do you have a view on how governance arrangements for the inspectorate could be developed to better involve providers, including teachers and other practitioners, pupils and students and parents/carers in inspection?
 - 3.5.12 Do you have a view on how we make sure evidence from inspections is being used as fully as possible to drive improvement and inform policy and on who the inspectorate should report to?

3.6 Engagement with key stakeholders

Consultation engagement activity is underway and involves headteachers, Parent Councils and the parental community, and young people. A briefing for elected members took place on 27 November 2023.

Feedback will be collated by 14th December and a draft report will be submitted to Scottish Government on 18 December 2023 on behalf of Midlothian Council.

The report will be considered by Council on 19 December 2023, with updates shared with Scottish Government following Council decision.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital, Risk and Equalities)

4.1 Resource

Not applicable at present as any impact is yet to be defined.

4.2 Digital

Not applicable at present as any impact on digital resources is yet to be defined.

4.3 Risk

Not applicable at present as any risk impact is yet to be defined.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities

Not applicable at present.

4.5 Additional Report Implications

Not applicable.

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- ☐ Holistic Working
- ☐ Hub and Spoke
- ☐ Modern
- ☐ Sustainable
- ☐ Transformational
- ☐ Preventative
- ☐ Asset-based
- ☐ Continuous Improvement
- ☐ One size fits one
- ☒ None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- ☐ One Council Working with you, for you
- ☐ Preventative and Sustainable
- ☐ Efficient and Modern
- ☐ Innovative and Ambitious
- ☒ None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

Not applicable at present as any impact is yet to be defined.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Key stakeholders have been involved in engagement sessions from across our communities.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not applicable at present as any impact on performance and outcomes is yet to be defined.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable at present.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable at present.

APPENDIX B

Background Papers/Resource Links (if applicable)

[Supporting documents - Education Bill provisions: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

[All Learners in Scotland Matter - national discussion on education: final report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)