

Update of Midlothian's Devolved School Management Scheme (DSM) to reflect the latest Scottish Government Guidance

Report by Dr Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform the Audit Committee of actions undertaken to ensure that Midlothian's DSM Scheme complies with the Devolved School Management (DSM) 2012 Guidelines.

2 Background

Devolved School Management (DSM) was introduced by the Scottish Education authority in 1993. The Scottish Executive issued DSM Guidelines in 2006 and the Scottish Government issued revised guidelines in 2012 alongside a Devolved School Management Self Evaluation Toolkit. An Internal Audit Report of May 2016 observed that the Midlothian DSM Scheme had not been revised to take account of the latest guidelines and recommended that a self assessment of the scheme be undertaken.

The aims of the revised Devolved School Management guidelines are to empower head teachers to meet local needs and deliver the best possible outcome for young learners, in line with the objectives of Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC and the Early Years Framework. The guidelines are based on a number of principles which are grouped under four headings:

- Subsidiarity and Empowerment
- Partnership Working
- Accountability and Responsibility
- Local Flexibility

3 Progress

A self assessment of the Devolved School Management Scheme was undertaken in November 2016 using the Devolved School Management Self-Evaluation Toolkit.

The self evaluation group comprised four primary and three secondary head teachers, one secondary school pupil, one elected member, Senior Education Manager, School Group Manager (Early Years), Education Resource Manager and DSM Resource Officer. Although invited, no parent representative was available to participate.

The review concluded that Midlothian's Scheme of Devolved School Management supports the core values and principles of a robust DSM Scheme namely subsidiarity, openness, transparency and local accountability. The review further concluded that Midlothian's scheme would be strengthened by the implementation of the following recommendations:

- Review staffing models/staffing structures/management time allocations across schools.

- Provide schools with longer term staff planning horizons by providing schools with forecasts of pupil numbers.
- Introduce a regular, three yearly, review of the DSM Scheme to fit the changing requirements of Education delivery and Getting It Right For Every Child.
- Review the impact of Council procurement on schools' budgets.
- Define clearly in the Midlothian DSM Scheme the responsibility and authority of the Headteacher to take decisions.
- Reflect in the Midlothian DSM Scheme parental engagement at the local level.

The Midlothian DSM Scheme is being revised to take account of a number of these recommendations as well as those in the Internal Audit Report. The revised scheme will be published to coincide with the start of the 2017/18 academic year. An action plan is being developed to take forward during 2017/18 those recommendations which require further review and may lead to changes in the basis and or criteria for the allocation of resources to schools.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising directly as a result of this report.

4.2 Risk

This report provides an update on the actions taken to address the risks arising from Midlothian's DSM Scheme not reflecting current national guidelines.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child

- Children in their early years and their families are being supported to be healthy, to learn and to be resilient.
- Children and young people are supported to be healthy, happy and reach their potential.
- Inequalities in learning outcomes have reduced.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The DSM Scheme is key to providing head teachers with the resources they need to meet local needs and deliver the best possible outcome for young learners.

4.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Council's adopts a preventative approach by providing head teachers with the resources they need to meet local needs and deliver the best possible outcome for young learners.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The group which carried out the self evaluation of Midlothian's DSM Scheme included representatives from schools, pupils and elected members as well as officers from the Education Service.

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

This paper informs Council of the actions undertaken to ensure that Midlothian's DSM Scheme complies with the Devolved School Management (DSM) 2012 Guidelines. The paper proposes no change to existing policy and procedure used and accordingly, no Integrated Impact Assessment has been prepared.

4.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

Regular review of the DSM Scheme will ensure its sustainability.

4.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising directly as a result of this report.

5 Recommendations

The Audit Committee is asked to note the actions undertaken to ensure that Midlothian's DSM Scheme complies with the Devolved School Management (DSM) 2012 Guidelines.

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