

National Discussion Consultation

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

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Council is requested to delegate authority to the Children, Young People and Partnerships Cross-party Group of members to sign off Midlothian Council's response to the National Discussion consultation prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

This report advises members of the National Discussion consultation which was co-convened by the Scottish Government and COSLA on 21 September 2022 and how key stakeholders within Midlothian have been supported to engage in the National Discussion and inform Midlothian Council's response.

Date: 29 November 2022

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3 Background

- 3.1 In 2020, the Scottish Government invited the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assess the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in primary and secondary schools to understand how school curricula have been designed and implemented in recent years. In June 2021, the OECD published Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future, an in-depth analysis of the progress made since 2015. The key recommendations set out in this report aim to support Scotland as it further enhances CfE to achieve its potential for the present and future of its learners.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government commissioned Professor Ken Muir, University of West of Scotland, to provide independent advice on aspects of education reform in Scotland. This included designing the implementation of the recommendations for structural and functional change of the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) and Education Scotland which arose from the OECD report.
- 3.3 Professor Ken Muir published his report, Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education on 9 March 2022, within which he made the following recommendation:

“The Scottish Government should initiate a national discussion on establishing a compelling and consensual vision for the future of Scottish education that takes account of the points made in this report, in particular the importance of placing the learner at the centre of all decisions. The vision for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) should be considered as part of this discussion as should consideration of how the education system seeks to address the purposes described in Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Invitations to shape this vision should be made to all partners and stakeholders, including all learners, teachers, practitioners, parents and carers. It will be important to ensure that ‘narrative privilege’ is accorded to all who have an interest and not just key educational bodies, with opportunities for all to debate and challenge emerging suggestions.”

- 3.4 The Scottish Government launched ‘Let’s Talk Scottish Education’ a national discussion on Scotland’s Education System in September 2022. The discussion is co-convened by the Scottish Government and CoSLA. Everyone who has a stake in the future of Scottish education is being invited to join to help build on the successes of our system and ensure it remains world leading for future generations. Two independent facilitators have been appointed to help shape the discussion; Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris.

3.5 Engagement with key stakeholders

The Education Service has proactively encouraged key stakeholder participation in the National Discussion. Our Parent and Learner Liaison Officer organised engagement sessions with parents/carers and learners from early years through to secondary senior phase, including our specialist provision. At the time of publishing this report, nine parent and 15 pupil consultation sessions have taken place, both face-to-face and virtual. Discussion sessions have also taken place with Headteachers and Parent Councils.

Whilst we continue to analyse the outcomes of these discussions there are recurring themes coming through, including:

- The need for life skills as well as subject content
- Improved support for children and young people who require additional support for learning
- Standardisation of the number of qualifications young people study

Once the analysis of the outcome of all of our discussions is complete, the Education service will prepare a report to be submitted on behalf of Midlothian Council.

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)

[National Discussion Scottish Education - Scottish Government - Citizen Space
\(consult.gov.scot\)](https://consult.gov.scot)

[Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education - gov.scot
\(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)