

Regional Education Improvement Collaborative: Update on the South East Improvement Collaborative

Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Head of Education

1. Purpose of the Report

Further to the Cabinet report dated 10 October 2017 regarding the establishment of Regional Improvement Collaboratives, the purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress made to date by the South East Improvement Collaborative (East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian and Scottish Borders).

2. Background

In June 2017, the Scottish Government published the outcome of the national consultation in their report entitled Education Governance: Next Steps. This publication is in five main sections:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: The Case for Change
- Chapter 3: A school and teacher-led system - Empowering teachers, parents and communities
- Chapter 4: Educational improvement services to support a school and teacher-led system .
- Chapter 5: Delivering an empowered system: next steps

A number of the changes outlined will require legislative change and the Scottish Government will consult on a new Education Bill in autumn 2017.

One of the specific priorities in the short term was to [work](#) in partnership with local authorities and partners to develop the shape and composition of the regional improvement collaboratives. Following the announcement of the agreed position between Cosla and the Scottish Government on the implementation of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives on Friday 28th September, this report sets out the progress made to establish the South East Improvement Collaborative.

The South East Directors of Education/Heads of Education and Chief Executives have been meeting regularly over the last couple of months to ensure that the South East Improvement Collaborative has a clear focus on adding value and keeps its work manageable to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. The two areas of work identified as the initial focus of the South East Improvement Collaborative are to improve attainment and achievement, including closing the attainment gap; and quality Improvement in schools and Early Years settings.

The paper attached as Appendix 1 details the scope of work expected to be undertaken and the governance arrangements to oversee the work of the South East Improvement Collaborative.

It is important to note that the work of each local education authority will continue to be overseen through existing governance arrangements at the local level.

Each Improvement Collaborative is to be led by a Regional Improvement Lead. The remit of the Lead is included in appendix 2. The South East Improvement Collaborative have nominated Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director for Education and Children's Services, Fife Council, as their lead on an interim basis for up to 6 months. The role is not a substantive post but instead is a role to help co-ordinate and lead the setting up of the South East Improvement Collaborative action plan using relevant data to inform areas of work and to ensure progress is made at an appropriate pace. The nomination of the Lead has been approved by the 5 Chief Executives and the Interim Chief Executive of Education Scotland.

The South East Improvement Collaborative will also have an Oversight group will comprise the convener/portfolio holders from each of the 5 local education authorities and the 5 Chief Executives. The Regional Improvement Lead will report to the Oversight group on the work contained in the action plan and progress being made. The Regional Improvement Lead will also report the progress of South East Collaborative to the Chief Executive of Education Scotland.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

The resource to deliver the pace of change within the Regional Improvement Collaboratives will be challenging. It is important to note that the report recognises the need for bespoke models, within a nationally agreed set of core functions, to be developed to reflect each region's particular context. Education Scotland has also announced that most of their education staff will be contributing to the collaboratives, working alongside staff from local authorities and schools to support and drive improvement. Discussions should now to be taken forward in regions in the first instance, including officials from both Education Scotland and the Scottish Government so that work can continue in close partnership.

We have already experienced an increased resource demand through the number of on-going consultations, response to a number of requests for data and data checking exercises for the upload of pupil level data. The most significant resource implications of the actions required are contained within section 5. In September, the results of the Financial Review of the Early Learning and Childcare sector were published and this review explored the expenditure on funded childcare to enable us to better predict the cost implications of different delivery models as we move towards the forthcoming expansion to 1140 hours by 2020. Further submissions are required by September 2017. In addition, the launch of the Fair Funding Review in June 2017 alongside this Education Governance report will examine the system changes required to deliver future finding to empower schools, decentralise management and the support through the encouragement of school clusters and creation of new educational regions and will implement any proposals arising from the Governance and Parental Involvement reviews at the earliest opportunity. In particular the Scottish Government will support the development and expansion of school clusters and increased regional working throughout 2017-18.

3.2 Risk

The previous Cabinet report dated 11 October 2016, highlighted the following risks: we welcome the relentless focus on closing the attainment gap in Education but we recognise that this requires a total Midlothian approach; although the delivery plan clearly states in the opening ambition statement that in order to close the attainment gap “our efforts must also extend beyond the classroom and across our communities and wider public services if we are to succeed in our ambition” (2016: 4); the delivery plan then continues with a narrow focus on the school level leavers without recognition of the critical role that other services including the Community Planning Partnerships and the third sector play in supporting education to close the poverty related attainment gap.

It is also important to note that there is currently no legislation in place in terms of a duty to collaborate.

If we are all to focus on the national endeavour to close the poverty related attainment gap then we should be focussing on what delivers improved outcomes rather than a review of structural governance arrangements. Caution should also be applied to the reference of funding directly to schools with an enhanced role for central government related to the attainment challenge, the role of Education Scotland, standardised testing and the transparency of attainment data proposed to be published on a school by school basis on Parent Zone similar to what is in place at present for the Senior Phase qualifications through Insight.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

The ambition in the delivery plan is already clearly embedded in the Single Midlothian Plan – reducing inequalities. 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

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

GIRFEC 5: Our people will be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

To close the gap by improving ‘attainment versus deprivation’ and ‘attainment for all’ outcomes for children and young people.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This report aims to ensure that we continue to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This report presents an update on progress with Regional Improvement Collaboratives following the publication of the Governance Review: Next Steps.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities

The recommendations in this report should be centred around the promotion of equity of attainment for disadvantaged children and support the steps being taken towards narrowing the attainment gap by imposing duties on education authorities and the Scottish Ministers in relation to reducing pupils' inequalities of educational outcome together with a duty to report on progress.

3.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no impacts arising directly from this report.

3.10 IT Issues

There are no IT issues to consider within this report at this time.

4 Recommendations

Cabinet are requested to:

- Endorse the principles outlined in the South East Improvement Collaborative paper attached in appendix 1.
- Agree to be part of the South East Improvement Collaborative Oversight group.
- Note that Dr Grace Vickers (Head of Education) and Lynn Black (Head Teacher – Beeslack High School) will represent Midlothian on the South East Improvement Collaborative Board.
- Give authority to officers from Midlothian to develop an action plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative with colleagues from the South East Collaborative.

Supporting Papers for on-going reviews in Scottish Education:

Standards in Scotland's Schools Act (2000):

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/6/pdfs/asp_20000006_en.pdf

Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000: Scottish

Government Consultation: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-performance-unit/statutory-guidance>

Education (Scotland) Act 2016:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/8/pdfs/asp_20160008_en.pdf

Updated guidance on Chapter 3 of the Standards in Scotland Schools Act, August 2016: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/08/5386/4>

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 by the National Parent Forum of Scotland: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/148166/0039411.pdf>

Financial Review of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland: the current landscape (Scottish Government; September 2016):

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00506148.pdf>

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: A Governance Review: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review>

Education Governance Review: Next Steps:

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/06/2941>

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