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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Alliance Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 March 2019</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Grant McGovern Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Communities</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Grant McGovern</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Autism Strategy – Progress to Implementation</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Inverclyde Alliance Board about the progress made in the implementation of Inverclyde's Autism Strategy 2014.

Further, this report will inform the Alliance Board on the decision to move to a direct contract award model in order to deliver the strategy outcomes. This change was agreed by the Education and Communities Committee on 22 January 2019.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In 2011, the Scottish Government's ASD Reference Group published The Scottish Strategy for Autism which acknowledged the improvement in the diagnosis, assessment and support for those living with autism through the development of a national 10 year autism strategy. The report provided 26 recommendations that looked to ensure improving services and access to services for those living with autism. Local Authorities were allocated funding from the Scottish Government to support the development of that strategy.

- 2.2 Subsequently, the Inverclyde Autism Strategy Implementation Group (AIG) was set up in April 2014 to oversee the implementation of the Inverclyde autism strategy. This strategy was published in 2014 to cover the ten-year period up until 2024. The strategy was based on a number of themes which would inform how it would be delivered.

In March 2018 a report was presented to the Committee (see EDUCOM/43/18/GM) proposing the restructure of the AIG to include sub-groups representing the both Autism Community and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector partners. At that time, the Committee agreed to the delegation of the governance of grant allocation to the Council's Grants Sub-Committee.

- 2.3 With regard to funding to support the aspiration that Inverclyde achieves recognition as an "Autism Friendly Authority", in March 2017 Inverclyde's Policy and Resources Committee approved the allocation of £150K from earmarked reserves to support with an additional £100K allocated from Inverclyde Council's budget process in April 2018.
- 2.4 In June 2018, the funding of an Autism Strategy Development Office was facilitated by CVS with the intention that day-to-day operational matters on the delivery of the strategy to be managed by Hugh Scott, Service Manager CLD. Following the completion of the recruitment process an Autism Development Officer was appointed in October 2018.
- 2.5 An invitation for applications for grant funding by 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector partners was posted on Inverclyde's website with applications to be received by the end of August 2018. Of the

seven application received from both national and locally based organisations, only one of the applications met the published criteria sufficiently to recommend to the Grants Sub-Committee that funding be allocated. Subsequently, at the meeting of the Education and Communities Committee on 22 January 2019, the officers' recommendation on the use of direct awards to partner organisations to deliver the outcomes of the strategy was agreed.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Inverclyde Alliance Board:

- a. Notes the progress made to date in the implementation of Inverclyde's Autism Strategy;
- b. Notes the change to the funding model to be used to achieve the stated Autism Strategy outcomes; and
- c. Considers Members' commitment to be included in raising awareness of Autism and to the training of frontline staff as outlined in Appendix 1 attached.

**Grant McGovern**  
**Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Communities**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

### 4.1 Strategy Development

In 2011, the Scottish Government's ASD Reference Group published The Scottish Strategy for Autism which acknowledged the improvement in the diagnosis, assessment and support for those living with autism through the development of a national 10 year autism strategy. The report provided 26 recommendations that looked to ensure improving services and access to services for those living with autism.

The vision stated in the strategy is that individuals on the autism spectrum are respected, accepted and valued by their communities and have confidence in services to treat them fairly so that they are able to have meaningful and satisfying lives.

The goals of the Strategy are to be realised in stages - Foundations (by 2 years), Whole-life journey (by 5 years) and Holistic-personalised approaches (by 10 years). Inverclyde's strategy outcomes reflect that staged development.

4.2 Development of Inverclyde's Autism Strategy 2014/24 was supported by national funding and produced by the HSCP in partnership with people with ASD, their families and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector partner agencies. Inverclyde's AIG was set up to oversee the implementation of the strategy which lays out actions required over that 10 year period to improve the lives of people in Inverclyde with Autism.

The strategy was based on a number of themes which would inform how it would be delivered. The main themes identified are:

- Developing positive, enabling and supportive networks
- Developing a co-ordinated Autism Training Plan for Inverclyde
- Equal and timely access to an evidence-based pathway for assessment and diagnosis and the support that should follow
- A co-ordinated system for advice and information about autism
- Co-ordinated services based on accurate data
- Services that can be robustly evaluated

A copy of the strategy can be viewed at:

<http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/files/2015/01/Alan-Best.pdf>

4.3 In March 2018, a report was presented to the Committee (see EDUCOM/43/18/GM) proposing the restructure of the AIG to include sub-groups representing the both Autism Community and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector partners. At that time, the Committee agreed to the delegation of the governance of grant allocation to the Council's Grants Sub-Committee.

### 5.0 Strategy Funding and Project Development

5.1 In March 2017 the approval was given (see report no: SW/23/2017/BC) for the allocation of £150K from Earmarked Reserves to support the aspiration that Inverclyde achieve recognition as an "Autism Friendly Authority". The AIG subsequently developed three key objectives to achieve that recognition, including:

- Developing community services and supports for people with autism that will assist in achieving an autism friendly Inverclyde;
- Developing services that will help to bridge the gaps that develop for young people impacted by autism at the transition period including signposting, resources and support;
- Early years including pre and post-diagnostic support and services.

Subsequently, in April 2018, an additional £100K was allocated to the implementation of the

strategy as part of Inverclyde Council's budget process and the Committee approved the delegation of the governance of grant allocation to the Council's Grants Sub-Committee.

5.2 In June 2018, the Corporate Management team agreed to the funding of an Autism Strategy Development Office post to be funded from the allocated EMR. While this post was to be facilitated by CVS, day-to-day operational matters are managed by Hugh Scott, Service Manager CLD. Following the completion of the recruitment process, a Development Officer was appointed in October 2018. The main responsibilities of the Development Officer are:

- Co-ordinate the implementation and development of the projects/initiatives funded to deliver the strategy;
- Co-ordinate the activities of Inverclyde's ASIG;
- Chair the ASIG sub-groups (Practitioners' Group; Users' Group); and
- Develop national and local networking opportunities for those 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations which support the Autism community; and
- Develop school/education and community based autism support groups, for example peer support of family support groups with the focus on providing support and access to funding opportunities and the development of an Inverclyde-wide autism network.

5.3 Applications for grant funding by 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations for projects or initiatives to deliver the strategy outcomes were posted on Inverclyde's website in June 2018 with applications to be received by the end of August 2018. There were seven applications received from both national and locally based organisations with, unfortunately, only one of the applications meeting the published criteria sufficiently to merit recommendation to the forthcoming meeting of the Grants Sub-Committee that funding be allocated.

## **6.0 Strategy Development and Delivery**

6.1 Given that the response from partner agencies in the submission of grant applications did not meet the minimum criteria for grant allocation as described in paragraph 5.2 above, advice from Procurement Services is that the negotiation and direct award of contract(s) with external organisation(s) to deliver the identified outcomes would be a more effective route to achieve the stated outcomes. The outcome criteria have been revised to take account of the grant allocation to the one successful applicant as mentioned above - a copy is attached as Appendix 1. The Service will engage with the market to identify provider(s) who can meet the outcome criteria.

This change was agreed by the Education and Communities Committee at its meeting on 22 January 2019. It is therefore anticipated that the commissioning process will be completed by the end of February 2019 with work on the projects commencing shortly thereafter. It will be the responsibility of the Autism Development Officer to monitor the progress of the commissioned projects with regular reports submitted to the ASIG.

6.2 Finally, the Alliance Board is asked to note that, as stated in the report to the Committee in March 2018 mentioned above, Inverclyde Education and HSCP were invited by Autism Network Scotland to participate in a short-term pilot project on autism support strategies along with four other local authorities. The outcome of those pilots was submitted to the Scottish Government's Strategy Group as part of its review of the national autism strategy.

Inverclyde's contribution to that programme of work was based on the previously identified pre- and post-diagnosis outcomes included in our local strategy. It is noted that the national strategy now includes the development of a post-diagnosis toolkit as one of its revised outcomes. See:

<http://www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk/strategy/key-documents.html>

## **7.0 Proposals**

7.1 The impact of Autism across the wider community continues to have a significant and

increasing impact on all of the partner services in the CPP. Changes in a number of areas of legislation including Equalities, Community Empowerment and Economic Fairness require that all partner agencies ensure that their policies and working practices offer equality of opportunity to all. It is therefore proposed that CPP members report back to a future meeting of the Alliance Board on the steps underway in their organisations to raise awareness of Autism and develop the capacity of their frontline staff to better support those impacted by Autism.

## **8.0 Implications**

Legal: N/A

Finance: Autism Strategy funded through allocated EMR.

Human Resources: N/A

Equality and Diversity: This report is consistent with the requirements of legislation around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Repopulation: The aspiration to achieve Autism Friendly status will enhance to Inverclyde's reputation.

## **9.0 CONSULTATION**

9.1 Inverclyde Autism Strategy Public Event 2014.

## **10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 Scottish Autism Strategy

<http://www.autismstrategyscotland.org.uk/strategy/key-documents.html>

10.2 Inverclyde HSCP Autism Strategy 2014-24.

<http://www.autismnetworkscotland.org.uk/files/2015/01/Alan-Best.pdf>

### **Inverclyde Council**

### **Inverclyde Autism Strategy Implementation Group**

### **Commissioning Criteria**

#### **Introduction**

The Autism Strategy Implementation Group have identified three priorities that, if implemented, will significantly improve outcomes for children, young people and adults with autism and their families and carers. Those priorities are:

- Pre- and Post-Diagnosis Support;
- Transition to Adult Services; and
- Training and raising awareness in the community

The ASIG are now looking to commission the design and development of an implementation strategy, where appropriate, and resources in each area. Successful implementation will require the successful applicant to consult with those with, or impacted by, autism and front-line service providers including Education Services, HSCP and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector partner organisations.

#### **1. Pre- and Post-Diagnosis Support**

The successful applicant would be required to audit and review the current provision of advice, information and resources available to parents/carers of children with autism-like behaviours and those having received a diagnosis of autism. This will include:

- An audit of current resources across Education and HSCP to inform and support parents and carers. This will include the sign-posting of service providers and other support networks;
- Conduct a review of existing information/communication to parents/carers – advice leaflets, brochures, on-line including website and social media;
- Identify exemplification of existing good practice by creating links with other local authorities and national support organisations;
- Work with Inverclyde's Autism Officer to develop a strategy to address identified gaps in resources and skills;
- Develop and design an effective pre- and post-diagnosis communication strategy that will include resources as stated above.

#### **2. Transition to Adult Services**

The successful applicant will further develop existing services to support young people and adults impacted by autism at a time of transition. This will include strengthening links with schools, Further and Higher Education, training and employability and adult support services. As with 1. above, this workstream will include the review and development of a range of literature and on-line resources signposting young people and adults to appropriate services and support. This will include:

- Audit of current provision to support transition post-education and to appropriate adult services, e.g. HSCP; centre-based community groups, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector providers, training and employment and post-16 education;

- Review of existing information/communication on transitions including signposting, resources and support available for those impacted by autism;
- Identify gaps in service provision and work with Inverclyde's Autism Officer to develop an appropriate strategic plan;
- Develop and design an effective communication strategy to support effective transition;
- Create links with local organisations providing autism training and awareness raising, see 3. below.

### **3. Training and raising awareness in the community**

The successful applicant will develop a framework to raise awareness of Autism in Inverclyde and provide support, advice and access to training for front facing staff in both the public and commercial sectors. This will include the provision of an organisations awareness of the development of an autism friendly environment, including commercial premises, e.g. shops and office space and, particularly front-facing customer services. This will include liaising with Inverclyde's Autism Officer to:

- Identify opportunities to facilitate the development of new and existing autism support groups across Inverclyde, e.g. peer support;
- Develop a communication strategy for networking existing and developing support groups using on-line and social media applications;
- Develop a communication strategy and implementation plan to raise awareness of Autism across Inverclyde, see 1. above;
- Identify existing good practice in community services and support;
- Work in liaison with Inverclyde Alliance Partners and commercial and public service providers to co-ordinate opportunities for training of front-line staff and to improve awareness of autism in Inverclyde;
- Develop strategic and working partnerships with commercial and public service providers across Inverclyde, e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Inverclyde Leisure, transport companies, etc.