
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	31 August 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/30/21/RB
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Subject:	Overview of National and Local Updates on Education		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Education and Communities Committee with an overview of local and national updates.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides updates on the following matters:

- Education response to the Local Development Plan
- Update on SQA process
- OECD report
- Music tuition in schools
- Funding for core curriculum
- Early Learning and Childcare updates

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to:

- Note the updates in this paper
- Agree that the registration charge for extra-curricular musical activities will be removed from August 2021 pending confirmation from the Scottish Government of continued funding beyond August, 2022.

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4.0 UPDATES

4.1 Education response to the Local Development Plan

Education Services submitted a response to the Local Development Plan for Inverclyde. The content of the response was:

Current population projections indicate that the school-age population is expected to continue to decline in Inverclyde, increasing further the present capacity within the overall education estate. This should limit the risk to school capacities from new housing in the proposed LDP, however migration trends within the authority could still lead to future pressure in certain parts of the school estate. School roll forecast modelling, using the latest population projections and the estimated LDP annual build rate, indicate that there may be a need for impact assessments to determine if there would be a requirement for mitigation measures if future developments come forward in catchments experiencing current occupancy pressure, increasing school rolls, or projected large-scale residential developments. An impact assessment at the time of application, that takes cognisance of the proposed nature of the developments and catchment schools capacity pressures (both at the time and projected), would assess the level of risk posed from the development and the cumulative effect of other developments within the catchment.

Education Services support the proposed LDP recommendation of preparing Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions, while acknowledging that this is just one measure that can be used to mitigate the impact of new housing on the education estate.

4.2 Update on SQA processes

The results were issued to pupils on 10 August 2021. Whilst teachers used a range of assessment evidence to decide what results should be, and every effort was made to ensure pupils get the right result, first time, the ability to appeal a grade is important.

A free appeals service has been made available directly to learners for the first time and this is the fifth and final stage of the alternative certification model.

The grounds for appeal are broad. There are three types of appeal:

1. an appeal against the academic judgement made
2. an appeal against an unresolved administrative error
3. an appeal on grounds of discrimination where:

there has been a breach of the Equality Act 2010 (which must have been either acknowledged by your school, college or training provider or established by a court or the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman), or

your school, college or training provider failed to provide agreed Assessment Arrangements.

4.3 OECD report

The Scottish Government invited the OECD to assess the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), to understand how curricula are designed and implemented in schools, and to identify what can be improved for CfE to continue delivering quality learning for all students. The OECD assessment looks at the Broad General Education (BGE) and the Senior Phase from an implementation perspective. The analysis was undertaken following standard OECD methodology, including desk-based policy analysis, interviews with stakeholders, school visits, exchanges with a practitioner's forum, and comparative analysis based on research and international practices. The full report can be accessed at <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/bf624417-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/bf624417-en>.

The Key findings in the report are:

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence continues to be a bold and widely supported initiative, and its design offers the flexibility needed to improve student learning further

Stakeholder engagement is at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence and offers the possibility, with better structure, for shared ownership and effective leadership of CfE

Continued efforts are needed to enhance the coherence of the policy environment with Curriculum for Excellence

The approach to the ongoing implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has lacked structure and long-term perspective

Recommendations for next steps:

Balance Curriculum for Excellence so students can fully benefit from a coherent learning experience from 3 to 18 years

- Re-assess CfE's aspirational vision against emerging trends in education. Find a better balance between breadth and depth of learning throughout CfE
- Adapt the Senior Phase to match the vision of CfE
- Continue building curricular capacity at various levels of the system using research

Combine effective collaboration with clear roles and responsibilities

- Ensure stable, purposeful and impactful stakeholder involvement with CfE
- Revise the division of responsibilities for CfE
- Structure a coherent communication strategy to support developments of CfE

Consolidate institutional policy processes for effective change

- Provide dedicated time to lead, plan and support CfE at the school level
- Simplify policies and institutions for clarity and coherence
- Align curriculum, qualifications and system evaluation to deliver on the commitment of Building the Curriculum 5
- Develop a systematic approach to curriculum review
- Lead the next steps for Curriculum for Excellence with a long-term view
- Adopt a structured and long-term approach to implementation

The Scottish Government response to the report can be found at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/oecd-review-of-curriculum-for-excellence-scottish-government-response/>

4.4 Music tuition in schools

One of the commitments made in the 'First Steps' document was to abolish fees for instrumental music tuition in schools within the new Government's first 100 days.

Ministers and COSLA Leaders have agreed to the initial one-year removal of fees which will be supported by funding from the Scottish Government to allow existing levels of provision to be maintained in academic year 2021-22.

The Scottish Government has committed to working with local authorities to develop a model for a long-term sustainable instrumental music tuition service which includes sustainable funding arrangements. SG officials are working with COSLA officers to consider the intent, impact, and broader implications of this policy.

Every authority will receive a share of the £5 million grant and in Inverclyde's case this is sufficient to fund the loss of income including the £10 registration charge for extra-curricular music activities. Inverclyde's share is £47k out of which £38k is required to compensate for the loss of income.

This funding is intended to see the pre-pandemic level of provision in local authorities sustained at no cost to families, and is intended to cover the cost of instrument hire as well as tuition. Inverclyde Council do not charge for the hire of instruments.

The Scottish Government has assumed that the level of provision and the number of pupils is largely determined for the coming academic year, with practical limits essentially meaning that even if there is more demand for instrumental music tuition as a result of the removal of charges, it would not be feasible for local authorities to deliver an increase in pupil numbers in 2021-22. Ongoing work is taking place to establish a sustainable approach to the service and to funding for future years, which will take account of an expected increase in demand.

4.5 Funding for core curriculum

One of the commitments made in the 'First Steps' document was to end charges which can be associated with the core curriculum in schools within the new Government's first 100 days.

Ministers and COSLA Leaders have agreed to distribute revenue funding of £6 million in the 2021/22 academic year across local authorities, based on the number of pupils 5-18 on the school roll in each area. The share for Inverclyde is £56k.

The aim of this policy is to remove charges sometimes levied on children and young people in primary and secondary schools for participation in core curriculum subjects, thereby removing limitations on participation by young people whose families are not able to meet such costs.

The scope includes:

- Classroom-based activity within the 8 core curriculum areas in the broad general education in primary and secondary school
- Activity associated with preparation for SQA qualifications in the senior phase

This would include (but is not limited to):

- All ingredients and materials required for home economics
 - All art materials
 - All materials required for design, manufacture and technology subjects
 - Scientific calculators for secondary school pupils
 - Theatre trips associated with SQA drama qualifications
 - The purchase of recorders where this is required for a class-based learning
- Provision of specialist equipment to support classroom learning during themed weeks (e.g. participation in STEM week)

The following areas are outwith the scope of this policy:

- After-school clubs, including associated transport
- School trips that do not fall within the definitions above (although consideration will be given to these at a later date as part of the manifesto commitment regarding ending charging for school trips for pupils experiencing disadvantage)
- School uniforms and PE kit, which are covered under a separate manifesto commitment
- Access to devices, which is covered under a separate manifesto commitment
- Optional instrumental music tuition which is covered under a separate manifesto commitment.

Given the need to reach agreement within the 100 day timescale, the current agreement in place relates to 2021-22 academic year only. The Scottish Government have advised

that further engagement will take place in the run up to 2022/23 Scottish Budget, to agree a longer term approach to this work.

The ongoing work on the cost of the school day means that schools in Inverclyde currently have no (or very limited) charges for core curriculum activities. Schools currently receive an amount for Devolved School Management which allows them to purchase resources as required. Therefore it is anticipated that, given the significant pressure on the council budget that the funding allocated to this initiative is treated as windfall income and be considered as part of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget.

5.0 Early Learning and Childcare Updates

5.1 The Scottish Healthy Milk and Snack Scheme Update

This scheme provides children in eligible pre-school settings with milk and a portion of fruit or vegetables from 1 August 2021.

All children who spend two hours or more a day in eligible childcare settings will be entitled to a serving of fresh milk and a piece of fruit or portion of vegetables. Children who cannot drink cow's milk for medical, ethical or religious reasons will be offered a specified non-dairy alternative.

Inverclyde Council will be responsible for administering the scheme for all childcare providers within Inverclyde. This includes local authority settings, funded providers and any other setting registered with the Care Inspectorate for the provision on Early Learning and Childcare.

The scheme is funded by a grant from Scottish Government.

5.2 Expansion of Specialist Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs in Early Learning and Childcare

Since the Emergency Powers report 'Requests to utilise underspend in the Early Learning' 10th June 2021 was approved there has been a review of specialist provision due to a significant increase in demand.

Specialist provision for children with severe and complex needs is delivered in Hillend Children's Centre and Craigmarloch 'Onesery'. These services currently provide 18 places for children aged 2 – 5 years. The demand for specialist provision continues to grow and therefore there is a requirement to provide additional places.

Hillend Children's Centre is scheduled to return to its refurbished premises in Summer 2021. This allows the complex medical needs provision to increase from 6 to 10 places and the communication and language service to increase from 6 to 10 places.

The practitioner child ratio for these children is 1:3 although for specific elements of personal care, medical procedures and transport a ratio of 2:1 is required. Some children's needs are so complex that they require 1:1 support at all times.

Additional staffing is also required to enable the service to operate safely over the extended day and year. Given the nature of the medical needs of children attending the service it has become evident that 2 managers need to be in attendance at all times.

The additional costs of this expansion is £113k in the current financial year. This increased cost is contained within the Early Year's budget.

5.3 Nursery Class Provision

The ELC sector in Inverclyde has a range of settings – 2 nursery schools, 9 Children / Family / Early Learning Centres and 12 nursery classes.

The number and type of nursery classes in Inverclyde has developed significantly in the last few years. Traditionally nursery classes were small settings delivery part-time education for children aged 3 – 5 years whereas there most settings now offer a more flexible, extended or specialist service.

The overall standard of ELC provision in Inverclyde is extremely high however the provision in most nursery classes is lower than that of standalone early learning settings. This is evidenced by Education Service’s quality processes and external evaluation.

A range of interventions have been implemented to close this gap including increased coaching and scrutiny, a range of professional learning and a strengthened management model.

The additional costs of this development is £37,000 in the current financial year. This increased cost is contained within the Early Year’s budget.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

6.1 Finance issues contained within report

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Music	Income	2021/22	(47)		SG Grant
Music	Income	2021/22	38		Income foregone
Schools	Income	2021/22	(56)		SG Grant, to be removed as a 22/23 saving
Schools	Supplies	2021.22	91		Healthy Snack Cost
Schools	Income	2021/22	(91)		SG Grant
Early Years	Employees	2021/22	113		Contained in Budget
Early Years	Employees	2021/22	37		Contained in Budget

Legal

6.2 N/A

Human Resources

6.3 N/A

Equalities

6.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

Repopulation

6.5 N/A

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 N/A

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A