
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	25 January 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/05/22/MR
Contact Officer:	Michael Roach Head of Education	Contact No:	01475 712824
Subject:	Scottish Attainment Challenge Refresh 2022/23 – 2025/26		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Committee on the Scottish Government's announcement in November 2021 regarding the future of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), herein to be referred to as the SAC refresh.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Cabinet Secretary set out in Parliament on 23 November her plans for the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), developed in consultation with local government and agreed by COSLA Leaders.
- 2.2 The announcement, as expected, confirmed that the current funding within the Scottish Attainment Challenge will now be redistributed between all 32 local authorities versus the current 9 Challenge Authorities and targeted challenge schools programme in non-SAC authorities.
- 2.3 This will see the current funding to existing SAC authorities tapered down over a 4-year period to a final amount in 2025/26.
- 2.4 The current SAC project in Inverclyde has had a focus on both sustainability and an 'exit strategy' throughout its existence, being established in 2015. This current Project Manager along with partners and stakeholders, who are already part of an overarching reference group that has been in place since 2015, are creating a long-term project plan which will map out the existing projects being pulled back over time.
- 2.5 Alongside 2.4 and also announced on 23 November 2021, schools' Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) will remain in place, with schools being informed of their annual funding allocation over the next 4-year time period, in the same way as the SAC Refresh.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to note the contents within this report.
- 3.2 Agree to a further update report at the March 2022 Committee to include a draft strategic plan for 2022 – 26 as well as a more detailed plan for the year 2022/23.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report contains the relevant updates linked to the Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh and the ongoing recovery for education services after COVID19.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Secretary set out in Parliament on 23 November her plans for the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC), developed in consultation with local government and agreed by COSLA Leaders.
- 4.3 This next phase of the SAC builds on the evidence set out in the Scottish Government and Education Scotland [5 year report](#) on progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap, the [Equity Audit](#), the [Audit Scotland report](#) on educational outcomes, and the [OECD review](#).
- 4.4 In summary the plans are that with the support of £1 billion over this parliamentary term, the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme, from 2022/23, will see:
- a broader recognition of children and young people's achievements and attainment,
 - continued empowerment of school leaders through Pupil Equity Funding,
 - a clearer and funded strategic role for all local authorities,
 - funding for Pupil Equity Funding and local authorities confirmed over 4 years to enable long term planning
 - continued support for care experienced children and young people, and
 - a clear framework to support recovery and accelerate progress, led by Education Scotland but with clear responsibilities for all parts of the education system which will enable a clearer line of sight right through the system on the impact of local approaches.

4.5 Mission

The overall mission is: *to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.*

- 4.6 This recognises the need to reflect the breadth of achievements that contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people including through improved post-school participation in positive destinations.
- 4.7 In doing so, this presents better alignment with Curriculum for Excellence and the findings of the most recent OECD and Audit Scotland reports which both indicate the need for stronger national and local data on the wider benefits of Scottish education alongside attainment in national qualifications and awards.
- 4.8 It also recognised the importance of all educational attainment in securing positive outcomes for children and young people and the value placed on nationally recognised awards by further and higher education providers and employers.
- 4.9 In contributing to this refreshed mission schools and local authorities are encouraged to collaborate with other services and the third sector, such as through community learning and development, youth work, social work or family support to work to overcome barriers to learning – and recognises the impact of that collaboration on closing the poverty related attainment gap and improving outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty.

4.10 Delivery model

The provision of PEF will continue in 2022/23, distributing funding to schools (via local authorities, as is currently the case) and empowering headteachers to take local decisions on approaches to tackling the poverty related attainment gap in their local contexts. These decisions will be taken within the above-mentioned framework for recovery and accelerating progress. With c. £130 million to be invested, this remains the primary means of distributing funds for local systems to tackle the poverty related attainment gap.

PEF allocation will be confirmed in early spring as usual.

- 4.11 Recognising that poverty exists in every local authority area in Scotland, the significant change to

the distribution of funding announced by the Cabinet Secretary is to stop the Challenge Authorities (£43m) and Schools' Programmes (£7m) and redistribute that funding across all 32 local authorities (£43m) and further invest in PEF.

- 4.12 In terms of local authority distribution, this responds to Audit Scotland's comments that funding under the current model does not fully capture pupils living in poverty and that the impact of Covid-19 requires us to re-consider how funding is targeted. It further responds to consistent feedback from the system via extensive stakeholder engagement that all 32 local authorities should have a clear and funded role in the Scottish Attainment Challenge, rather than just the 9 Challenge Authorities.
- 4.13 For the Schools' Programme, this was initiated in recognition that there were some school communities outside the 9 Challenge Authorities with high concentrations of poverty based on SIMD. The subsequent introduction of PEF and its rising costs mean that issuing two separate funding streams to schools is a duplication and by absorbing Schools' Programme funding into PEF, this funding will better support all pupils who need it through a streamlined approach to both local authority and school level distribution.
- 4.14 The allocations for Inverclyde are set out below and have been determined using Children in Low Income Families data, which directly measures household income thereby providing a precise count of deprived children in each local authority. This will see our SAC funding being tapered back over the next 4 years.

Year	SAC funding allocation
2021/22	£3,467,107
2022/23	£2,748,713
2023/24	£2,030,319
2024/25	£1,311,926
2025/26	£593,532

- 4.15 The existing funding for Care Experienced Children and Young People will continue, demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to supporting this cohort of pupils and keeping the Promise. Allocations for this funding stream will be confirmed by the summer in 2022 as usual.
- 4.16 The Scottish Government will continue to invest in a number of national programmes and will be developing further plans for this before April 2022.

5.0 Next steps and planning for the SAC refresh

From April 2022 we will begin to implement a revised / refreshed model of the existing SAC project.

- 5.1 Throughout the existing project we have always been aware that this funding was not allocated on a permanent basis and therefore a key tenet of our work has been to plan an exit strategy, ensure we know which aspects of the project have been most impactful and to ensure that strategies employed are sustainable beyond the project. This has been overseen by the existing reference group. Throughout the existing project we have always been aware that this funding was not allocated on a permanent basis and therefore a key tenet of our work has been to plan an exit strategy, ensure we know which aspects of the project have been most impactful and to ensure that strategies employed are sustainable beyond the project. This has been overseen by the existing reference group.
- 5.2 In response to the confirmation of the above we have established a core group to oversee the planning for the next phase of project and plan for this transition to be as smooth as possible.
- 5.3 We are currently mapping out the budgeting for the project over the next 4 years against different models that we can consider. This includes considering any HR implications relating to staff currently employed in the challenge team. We are utilising a logic model to identify what the final project offer will be against the 2025/26 budget allocation.
- 5.4 We are also in the process of consulting with Head Teachers, senior leaders and partners to understand which aspects of the project they feel have been most beneficial.
- 5.5 Moving forwards it is also clear that we will need to work closely in collaboration with Head Teachers to be clear on what the offer is from the central project so that they can consider how best to plan for

the spend of their PEF over the next four years i.e. there may be aspects of the project that will no longer be provided centrally and so schools may wish to offer this from within their PEF allocation or as part a collective with support from the LA.

- 5.6 We would aim to bring a project plan proposal to committee in March 2022 in line with the submission deadline to the Scottish Government which has yet to be confirmed.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

There are no specific costs linked to this plan but Members should note the decrease in funding of almost £3million pounds over a 4 year period.

One off Costs

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

Annual Recurring Costs (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.2 Legal

None

6.3 Human Resources

There will be significant Human Resources issues attached to this plan. These will include the termination of secondments and disruption to ongoing backfill and the need to replace teachers currently funded from the Attainment Challenge into core staffing allocations. This could mean limited opportunities to advertise teaching and support posts on a permanent (or even a temporary) basis over coming years. To give an indication – there are currently 58 staff employed by the Council through SAC funding – this includes 41 teachers (32.8 fte)

6.4 Equalities

Equalities

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

✓

YES

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.

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.

NO

6.5 Repopulation

N/A.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 Reference made in 5.4 to a national consultation re the SQA and Education Scotland.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 N/A.