

Education, Children and Young People Strategic Plan – May 2016

The COSLA Constitution contains four key principles which are intended to enhance the status and position of local government as part of the governance of Scotland. The principles are as follows:

- **Local Democracy must be empowered**
Local government needs an unequivocal place in Scotland's constitutional future
- **Services should be integrated and not centralised**
Power must be brought closer to communities not centralised
- **There should be a focus on outcomes not inputs**
All parts of government must plan for and resource the outcomes that communities want
- **Local choice should be defended and local accountability strengthened**
Excellent public services must be connected to the daily lives of communities

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide an opportunity for the Executive Group to scrutinise the work of COSLA to ensure that it is consistent with the above principles.

Key to the Plan

Amber – current progress

(Green) – progress at March 2016

(New) - workstream that has changed significantly or was not present in the last iteration of the plan

Complete – workstream this is complete and will be removed from the workplan

Strategic Objective 1 – Local service provision is strengthened, accountable to local people and improves outcomes for children				
Outcomes	Work streams	Update on work stream	Political Priority	Progress
1. Local authorities are in a position to modernise and maintain a high quality school and pre-school estate	We will through contact with local authorities, SG and SFT keep a watching brief on implementation of Schools for the Future Programme. We will also, with ADES, influence SFT's work on the early year's estate to ensure that it is consistent with local government's position on early years policy.	<p>See agenda item for update on SFT's work on the early years estate.</p> <p>There has been significant press coverage recently regarding structural repairs required to be made to a number of schools, which were built by one construction firm as part of a Private Finance Initiative contract around 2000-2005. This matter has affected a number of councils and we know that all LAs have been asked to carry out checks on schools and other public buildings and alert Scottish Futures Trust to any adverse findings. We will continue to monitor this issue and report to future Executive Group meetings, should further matters come to light.</p>	Medium	Green (No change)
2. Local government's position on education service delivery is supported and strengthened, with national policy clearly reflecting the views of local authorities.	We will work to strengthen local government delivery of school and pre-school education. This will include work to positively state the benefits delivered by local government for education, but also to respond to Government policy. This work will include an ongoing response to the 2015 OECD report on the curriculum for excellence and the theme of a strengthened 'middle' to Scottish education. We will, after the election, work to establish a joint COSLA/Ministerial improvement board for education and will report to members on progress.	See agenda item 4	High	New

	We will support and co-chair with the Minister for Learning and Skills the Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS).	The latest SAGRABIS meeting was held on 9 th March 2016 and discussion took place on the refresh of the bullying guidance "A National Approach" which will give a greater emphasis to the protected characteristics. School exclusion guidance "Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 – A Positive Approach to Managing School Exclusions" has also recently been updated. The 3 yearly Behaviour in Schools research project is underway with quantitative returns from all schools already in and qualitative research in a number of schools due to take place in October. The final report is likely to be published in early February 2017.	Medium	Green (No Change)
	We will ensure that local government's position on 1 + 2 language policy is taken on board and the policy is funded for future years.	The Scottish Government recently commissioned ADES to conduct an in depth report on implementation of the 1 + 2 policy in a number of local authorities, the report noted good progress in primary school but noted less progress in secondary schools. The report noted duplication across local authorities in developing teaching methods and resources and suggested that greater national co-ordination would be beneficial. This report should be available for wider circulation after the Scottish Parliament Elections. COSLA Officers continue to participate in the Languages Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) whose membership includes unions, teacher education providers, Education Scotland, SCILT, ADES, Scottish Government and the GTCS. We have also been in discussion with Scottish Government on funding for 2016/17 and beyond.	Medium	Amber (No Change)
	We will attend the strategic board for teacher education and ensure that its work consistently supports delivery of wider education policy.	The most recent meeting of the strategic board considered the issues of lack of take up by teachers of the Level 11 Masters qualification. COSLA is discussing the issue of teacher vacancies with SG, with a view to a possible exercise to gather particular data on vacancies at council level to highlight the extent of the issue and what impact this might have on the pupil/teacher ratio.	Medium	Green (No Change)
4. Local government has a clear position on the future early years' policy, including any further expansion for early learning and childcare.	We will work to develop a policy position on the future expansion of early learning and childcare. We will also develop a response to Government's policy of 1140 hours and to other, allied initiatives, such as degree qualified staff in nurseries in areas of deprivation.	See agenda item 6	High	Green (No Change)

	<p>We will monitoring of the percentage uptake up Free School meals provision for all P1-P3 pupils to ensure that LAs have sufficient resources to deliver the policy. We will also work with Scottish Government on future eligibility criteria for FSM in preparation for the introduction of Universal Credit</p>	<p>The last monitoring undertaken on uptake by P1-3 pupils was in the latter half of 2015. At that time, returns did not indicate that overall there had been an increase beyond that estimated by SG.</p> <p>We held discussions last year with SG linked to future eligibility for free school meals in relation to Universal Credit and are seeking to re-engage with officers on this matter as we understand that this beginning to be raised by parents in receipt of Universal Credit.</p>	Medium	Amber (No Change)
--	--	---	--------	----------------------

Strategic Objective 2 – Local government is supported by policy, legislation and resources to tackle inequality

Outcomes	Work streams	Update on work stream	Political Priority	Progress
1. Educational attainment and closing the gap in attainment between highest and lowest achievers is at the top of Government's agenda, and is improved by the coordinated work of local and Scottish Government.	We will work to establish more coordination on effort to improve attainment. This will include the development of data collection from the National Improvement Framework and ensuring that the attainment challenge develops in line with wishes of local government.	See agenda item 5	High	Green (No change)
2. Local and Scottish Government's collective response to child poverty is well coordinated and takes on board the wishes and expertise of local authorities	We will work to develop a coordinated local government response to child poverty and will ensure that this is taken on board by Government at the Ministerial Advisory Group.	We will seek a political meeting with the new Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary with portfolio responsibility for child poverty, given local government's central role in addressing and alleviating child poverty. We will attend the next meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Child Poverty when confirmed by SG officials and seek to exert influence on any considerations for potential legislation in relation to child poverty.	High	Green (No change)
3. Local government is in a good position to support young people into sustained, quality employment	We work with Government and SLAED on Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive	Implementation of SERI is now an operational matter for local authorities following a pause on this at the end of last year. As such, the initiative started again from 1 April 2016 to 31 January 2017 and has a much sharper focus on improving the job prospects of young people who face the greatest barriers to employment. There are no further updates at this stage. We have been working with Government on some legacy issues stemming from the former Youth Employment Scotland fund, and we would expect to discuss employability with relevant new Ministers at some point in the near future. This work stream is also related to agenda item 9 on the developing the young workforce programme and the UK Government's apprenticeship levy.	High	Green (No change)

	We will work with Government and professional associations on the implementation of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce. This will include work to lobby on the apprenticeship levy by the UK Government.	See agenda item 9	High	Green (No change)
--	--	-------------------	------	----------------------

Strategic Objective 3 – Local government is able to protect children, is a good corporate parent and provides high quality support for children with a disability or additional support need				
Outcomes	Work streams	Update on work streams	Political Priority	Progress
1. New, improved and sustainable models for children's services are developed and commissioned in line with local government's focus on outcomes	We will ensure that the Executive Group is informed on the operation and future of the national framework contracts for secure, residential and foster care.	See agenda items 10 and 11	Medium	Green (No change)
	We will work with Government to promote strategic commissioning at the local and national level, including in the implementation of the Doran review for children with complex additional support needs. We will also keep members updated as required on issues arising from ASL provision and on policy affecting young carers.	<p>The final statutory annual report by Ministers on implementation of the ASL Act was published in March. This year the report considers implementation of the Act in relation to mental health in schools. As happens every year, Ministers are under a requirement to publish, as part of the report, information about expenditure on ASL provision. A copy of the report is available on the Scottish Government's website: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497314.pdf</p> <p>Work on national commissioning for children with complex support needs (Doran review) continues although as we reported in March pace of work is slower than hoped.</p> <p>We are also keeping a watching brief on developments on Government's work on realigning children's services. We hope to be able to say more about this at a future meeting.</p>	Medium	Green (No change)
	COSLA will work with Social Work Scotland and Scottish Government to raise awareness and promote the protection of children. We will work with partners on the establishment of a new child protection improvement service within centre for excellence for looked after children (CELCIS). We will also work with Government on child	See agenda item 8a and 8b	High	Green (No change)

	protection summit which is due to be held in June 2016.			
2. Local and national policy for looked after children and youth justice continue to improve and deliver benefits for children and young people.	We will work with Government and SWS on policy related to looked after children. This will include monitoring of resource implication, corporate parenting and working on implementing changes to aftercare and continuing care.	We will work closely with SWS in order to formulate a response to the new Scottish Government's manifesto commitments on policy relating to looked after children especially in relation to potential resource pressures for councils.	Medium	Green (No change)
	We will work with Government and Social Work Scotland to ensure the successful implementation of our agreement on kinship care allowances and that we develop a sustainable longer term position which responds to the introduction of universal credit.	We will work with the Scottish Government and SWS to develop a new model for kinship care over the forthcoming months that is satisfactory from a local government perspective.	High	Green (No change)
	We will work to ensure that local government influences the work and considerations of the new Youth Justice Board and the wider youth justice agenda.	We will attend the next meeting of the Youth Justice Board on 23 June and respond to the consultation on reducing the minimum age of criminal responsibility.	Medium	Green (No change)
	We will work to ensure that practical issues identified by local authorities are taken on board by SSSC and SG during implementation of Level 9 qualifications for all residential care staff	A Government led group looking at issues relating to the instruction of the Level 9 qualification is due to begin meeting in May. COSLA officers have been invited to be part of the group and will bring back any issues relating to the matter to future meetings.	Medium	Green (No change)

Key to the Plan

Amber – current progress

(Green) – progress at November 2015

New) - workstream that has changed significantly or was not present in the last iteration of the plan

Complete – workstream this is complete and will be removed from the workplan

- **Low** No contention over the issue
No negative media risks
- **Medium** Low level tension in national/local positions
There are potential consequences for the public reputation of Local Government
There is potential for negative media coverage of the issue
There is a potential but manageable conflict of interests between Councils
There are financial implications for Local Government
- **High** There are divergent/polarised positions between the Scottish Government and Local Government
There is a substantial risk to the relationship between the Scottish Government and Local Government
There is an imminent risk to Local Government's reputation
There are substantial financial implications for Local Government
There is strong internal conflict between Councils over the issue

Children and Young People Team Members

Robert Nicol	Chief Officer (100%) *	0131 474 9241	robertn@cosla.gov.uk
Mike Callaghan	Policy Manager (100%)	0131 474 9264	mike@cosla.gov.uk
Kathy Cameron	Policy Manager (100%)	0131 474 9262	kathy@cosla.gov.uk
John Urquhart	Policy Officer (50%)	0131 474 9273	johnu@cosla.gov.uk

*Percentage of time allocated to the team