

## EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 16 SEPTEMBER 2009

### FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND ASSOCIATED ROLL OUT OF AN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

#### Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of Cabinet with information in respect of a Framework for Learning Communities and the associated roll out of an integrated assessment framework for children and young people, and to seek endorsement for these proposals.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A review of Learning Partnerships was carried out as part of the Business Review arrangements in relation to the budget setting exercise for financial year 2009/10. As a result of this review Cabinet received a report on 3 June 2009 which sought approval from Cabinet for the deletion of Children's Service Coordinators posts.
- 2.2 The planning landscape has changed over the years since Learning Partnerships were established and in particular the overall vision for all children and young people as articulated through *Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC)*. In addition, the Early Years Framework was launched in December 2008, which has brought with it a sharper focus on early intervention and intervening early in a child's life. The Framework focuses on supporting children and families from pre birth to 8 years of age. The overall vision as set out in the 7 key outcomes for children and young people remain central to ascertaining whether we are effectively delivering child centred services, and importantly improving outcomes.
- 2.3 As part of the overall approach within East Ayrshire and on an Ayrshire Wide basis to support GIRFEC, the development of an integrated assessment, planning, reviewing and monitoring framework has been developed. This aims to ensure that there is one framework for planning around the needs of a child and in particular, establishing one plan for that child.

#### 3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Given the changing landscape, the need to ensure services are sustainable in the future, and building on what works, it is proposed to replace Learning Partnerships with Learning Communities. The objectives of Learning Communities are to:
- deliver better, sustainable, integrated children and young people's services at a local level;

- raise attainment and increase achievement;
- improve educational and all life outcomes for children and young people;

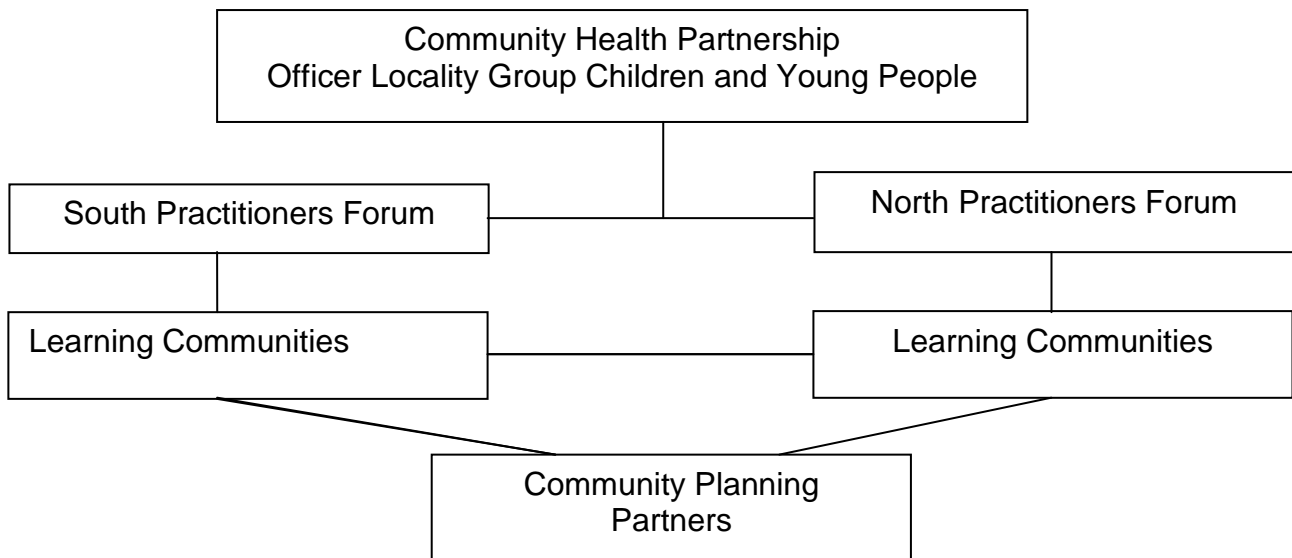
**3.2** The overall concept of Learning Communities is to develop links which already exist and build on the excellent work already undertaken between recognised groups of educational establishments and community planning partners, while taking into account new expectations regarding the need to further improve educational and all life outcomes if we are to deliver the vision for all Scotland's children and young people. There are five key areas which the learning communities groupings will work together on within their clusters:

- The effective roll out of We Can And Must Do Better;
- Training to all relevant staff in all educational establishments;
- To implement the Integrated Assessment Framework component of *Getting It Right For Every Child*;
- To ensure the effective deployment of core support services through Children and Families Social Work Services, Community Learning and Development Services and Health Services in learning communities;
- To ensure the inclusion of children and young people in educational establishments.

**3.3** In working within the context of the Learning Communities there are significant benefits through mutual support across designated managers in educational establishments; through sharing practice and ensuring consistency of approach; by supporting the early identification of need and coordination of services and importantly ensuring that there is a strong ethos of inclusion across Learning Communities supporting a consistency of approach in all educational establishments.

## **4. THE STRUCTURE**

**4.1** All educational establishments and the Community Learning and Development Service will meet on a cluster basis as learning communities to continue to take forward services under the auspices of the GIRFEC framework,. This includes educational issues, managing continuous improvement and supporting transition arrangements from pre school onwards. These meetings will be open to colleagues from other services to attend and discuss operational matters of shared interest. The undernoted diagram sets out the overall structure



**4.2** It is important for Cabinet to note that this is not about identifying additional resources to support Learning Communities, it is in essence about people working better together, sharing these resources which include staff, time, as well as financial with the aim of better meeting children and young people's needs.

**4.3** A copy of the Learning Communities Framework is available on the Members Portal.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK**

**5.1** The Ayrshire Integrated Assessment Framework is a fully coordinated, systematic approach, to gathering, assessing and evaluating information in relation to children in need or at risk of harm. It should result in an agreed multi agency action plan for that child, which is jointly resourced as appropriate and reviewed.

**5.2** The Framework is based on health, education and social work services working together with shared responsibility. The work aims to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children through better Integrated Children's Services and adheres to the principle of *one child; one assessment; one action plan*. The assessment model promotes a systematic, early identification of concerns about a child by all agencies from pre birth onwards.

**5.3** The challenge in taking forward such an Integrated Assessment Framework has been enormous and will continue to be significant. Although in East Ayrshire there is long history of very good joint working across professionals, each profession has up until now had its own paperwork, processes and systems. With the development of an Integrated Assessment Framework, the need to bring these systems together a significant challenge.

**5.4** In taking forward the Framework, training for all agencies is essential. It is proposed that the roll out is phased as set out below:

- Auchinleck, Doon and Cumnock Learning Communities

- Loudoun, St Joseph's James Hamilton Learning Communities
- Kilmarnock Grange, Stewarton Learning Communities

**5.5** The first two Learning Communities will be rolled out before June 2010, followed by the third in the new academic session. It is not realistic to encompass all children initially and therefore the rollout will focus on those children subject to child protection processes; children whose needs require a multi agency discussion through Community Assessment Team Meetings; pre birth assessments; preparation of Social Background Reports and LAAC reviews.

**5.6** The Education (Additional Support for Learning) Act placed new statutory responsibilities on Education Authorities in respect of children and young people with educational additional support needs. The development of a Coordinated Support Plan, for certain children, is set in statute, as part of this legislation. There are elements of this process and paperwork which will be integrated with the integrated assessment framework, but which may require to retain separate paperwork.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** There are no additional costs associated with the establishment of Learning Communities. To support the implementation of the roll out of the Integrated Assessment Framework delegated authority was given by the Head of Human Resources to establish a temporary post until June 2010. Funding is available through departmental balances.

## **7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** Nil

## **8. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** The developments set out in this paper are discussed and taken forward as part of the Community Health Partnership Officer Locality Group structure.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

**9.1** The roll out of the Integrated Assessment Framework has been risk assessed.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1** It is recommended that members of Cabinet:

- (i) endorse the proposals contained in this report.
- (ii) Otherwise note the content of the report.

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**Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

KG/JW  
3 September 2009

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Framework for Learning Communities

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service, Community Support, Tel (01563) 576104

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**