

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 6 FEBRUARY 2008

PRIORITY TO IMPROVEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2007-08

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the strategic priorities for the Education Service set out in the Service Improvement Plan 2007-08 within the context of Priority to Improvement 2007-10.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, section 5, sets out a requirement on Education authorities to prepare and publish a statement setting objectives. This was to be done following consultation with parents, teachers, children and young people and other representative bodies. Such a statement, known as the 'annual statement of educational improvement objectives', sets out the strategic priorities for improvement within East Ayrshire education service.
- 2.2 In 2007, following wide ranging consultation, evaluation and research, the approach to service improvement was revised to provide far greater clarity and focus with regard to the strategic direction of the service.

This new approach:

- Put children and young people at the centre
- Encouraged creativity in learning and teaching
- Provided greater opportunities for head teachers to be leaders in learning
- Engaged more with parents, children and young people
- Improved links to the Community Plan and other initiatives such as –
 - Curriculum for Excellence
 - The Scottish Executive Vision for Children and Young People (the Seven Outcomes)
 - The Journey to Excellence (the Ten Dimensions)
 - The National Priorities in Education

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE EDUCATION SERVICE

- 3.1 As indicated in 2.2 the fundamental aim of this new approach to Service Improvement was to provide clarity and focus. To this end there are only five Improvement Priorities for the Education Service:

- Improved Standards of Literacy

- Improved Standards of Numeracy
- Improved Attendance and Levels of Inclusion
- Promotion of Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Development

All of these are directly relevant to the learning needs of our young people and the community of which they are a part. Consultation with heads of establishments of all sectors have confirmed this approach as meeting the needs of young people and the school community.

3.2 Improved Standards of Literacy

The emphasis is on reading, writing, talking and listening across the curriculum. Equally, it may mean improved standards of literacy in key areas of learning such as historical literacy or even scientific literacy.

3.3 Improved Standards of Numeracy

Confidence with numbers is essential to living. Most obviously, many vocational areas – accounts, engineering, mechanics, retail and leisure trades require skills with number. Numeracy is more than mathematics; it is building confidence in data handling and analysis.

3.4 Improved Attendance and Levels of Inclusion

Put simply, for children to learn they need to attend. Ensuring good attendance is more than efficient registration, it is about establishing a real interest in learning, making the curriculum accessible to everyone; engaging, supporting and motivating; and meeting learning needs.

3.5 Promotion of Health and Wellbeing

All schools will be encouraged to become health promoting schools. But this is also about lifestyles, personal and social development and young people feeling good about themselves. It is also about tolerant and caring attitudes.

3.6 Sustainable Development

The importance of our planet and our community is paramount. Young people must be helped to understand this and the need to safeguard their own future and that of their children. All of our schools will be eco schools. They will encourage responsibility through participation in sports and cultural activities, citizenship and enterprising approaches.

4. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007-08

- 4.1** The Service Improvement Plan sets out the context for continuous improvement within the Education Service. It provides a review and evaluation of the previous years plan and it sets out the objectives over the coming year designed to deliver the five high level priorities of the service.

The review and evaluation of the impact on children and young people, on staff and on the community is the basis of the Service Standards and Quality Report which fulfils the Department's obligation in terms of Public Performance Reporting.

- 4.2** The full text of the Service Improvement Plan 2007-08 is available electronically on the elected members' portal and a copy is also available in the members' information point..

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The education budget has been allocated to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and to provide best value.

6. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Service delivery is set within the context of national and local policy and legislative frameworks.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The key priorities set out in Priority to Improvement 2007-10 are designed to address directly or indirectly all of the key areas of the Community Plan.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** Risks in service delivery have been fully taken into account.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1** It is recommended that members:

- (i) approve the Service Improvement Plan objectives for 2007-08;
- (ii) invite the Executive Director to report on progress in due course; and
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

KMcK/EO'N
16/01/08

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Educational Improvement Objectives: Priority to Improvement 2007-10 - Education Committee, 20 November 2007
2. Achievement Against National Priorities and Standards and Quality Report for 2006 – Education Committee, 30 January 2007

Members requiring further information should contact Kenneth McKinlay, Acting Head of Service: Schools Tel: (01563 576126) or

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