

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2006

PRIORITY TO IMPROVEMENT 2006

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** To seek approval for a new set of local improvement objectives to cover the calendar year 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** It is a statutory requirement under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act, 2000, that each year, the education authority must publish a statement of "local improvement objectives". It has been the practice in East Ayrshire to launch these objectives under the working title "Priority to Improvement". Members will recall previous reports that have been presented to Committee on this and related matters.
- 2.2** In previous years the practice has been to relate the local improvement objectives closely to the National Priorities for education. This approach allows for streamlining of planning processes and ensures a coherence of approach.

3. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR 2006

- 3.1** A wide-ranging consultation process has taken place. This has involved school boards, young people, the teachers' unions and ancillary staff unions. Heads of establishment were consulted directly on the issues arising from the annual improvement planning cycle. This year, a new and significant exercise was mounted which involved members of the Directorate visiting all learning partnerships to obtain the views of all teachers and ancillary staff employed in schools. This was to allow all colleagues to contribute directly to the improvement planning process. In doing so, the intention to give front-line staff a greater voice in the planning process which was announced in the report to Committee of 01 February 2005 has been realised. A number of very positive and worthwhile views were obtained as a result of this exercise.

3.2 Additionally, the Department has been able to draw on a number of evaluation exercises that have taken place during 2005. These include the informal verbal feedback from the inspection of the education authority by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIe) and the assessments carried out under the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). Reflecting the increasing emphasis on the delivery of integrated services, greater weight has also been afforded to matters of relevance to pre-school, community learning and development, onsite and social work services.

3.3 As a result of these consultations and self evaluations some changes are proposed from Priority to Improvement 2005. Principally, the changes relate to a clear demand to more tightly focus the objectives into key areas of provision to better support raising attainment in core skills. These changes do not however mark a significant alteration of overall direction however. The proposed local improvement objectives would therefore be:

National Priority 1: Achievement and Attainment

Increase levels of literacy and numeracy for all by:

- Introducing East Ayrshire's Literacy Development Programme to raise 5-14 attainment.
- Extending adult and family literacy programmes to all Learning Partnerships.

Improve attainment and achievement by:

- Improving identification, target setting and tracking of pupil performance specially for the lowest 20%.
- Providing greater curriculum flexibility and vocational education.

National Priority 2: Framework for Learning

Continually develop teachers' skills by:

- Providing high quality programmes of CPD based on needs arising from individual professional review and the improvement planning process.
- Emphasising leadership at all levels, self evaluation and collegiate working.

Increase self-discipline in learners by:

- Promoting Better Behaviour – Better Learning through Quality Circle Time, staged intervention, non-violent crisis intervention, and restorative practices.

- Providing opportunities for learners' involvement in mentoring, buddy programmes and community, sporting and cultural activities.

National Priority 3: Inclusion and Equality

Ensure that all learners benefit equally from education by:

- Engaging children and young people in the highest quality learning activities designed to meet their needs.
- Fostering a culture of ambition, achievement and inclusion.

Support those with additional support needs by:

- Developing policies and guidelines to ensure effective implementation of the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act.

Make provision for those who require Gaelic Medium teaching (or other lesser used languages) by:

- Consolidating Gaelic provision across all sectors and supporting adult learners in Gaelic.

National Priority 4: Values and Citizenship

Increase self respect for self and others by:

- Ensuring all establishments become eco and health promoting schools

Increase awareness of interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society and increase awareness of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society by:

- Embedding citizenship across the curriculum for all learners.
- Working in partnership with parents to strengthen the role of the wider community in the formation and development of learners in a multi-cultural society.

National Priority 5: Learning for Life

Equip learners with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society by:

- Increasing the number of children and young people participating in physical activity and sport, the arts and cultural activities both within and outwith educational establishments.
- Developing critical thinking and problem solving skills and a positive attitude to managing change in their lives.

Increasing levels of creativity in young people's lives by:

- Exposing all learners to experiences which challenge and stimulate them and which develop an enterprising and proactive approach to lifelong learning.

- 3.3** In 2005 a new category of "Authority Special Objectives" was introduced, and a number of these were overtaken during 2005. Within this category it is therefore proposed to include:
- Promoting integrated service delivery through continued promotion and evaluation of the work of learning partnerships.
 - Implementing a quality assurance framework for child protection.
 - Developing key elements of provision arising from "A Curriculum for Excellence" through the Schools for Ambition and 20-20 Vision programmes.
 - Delivery of the "Building Learning Communities" school renewal programme.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** Nil

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The section "Special Authority Objectives" and modifications to other sections allows for the inclusion of objectives that are a priority to services including Early Years, Social Work, Onsite and Community Learning and Development. Such objectives will however be reviewed against other planning processes such as the Community Plan and the Children's Service Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** These improvement priorities will be supported from within existing resources and principally the National Priorities Action Fund.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members :

- (i) approve this report as the basis for the authority's statutory local improvement objectives for 2006;
- (ii) note that some objectives will require co-ordination with other mandatory processes; and

(iii) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
GRS/GRS
26 January 2006

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Service: Quality Improvement, (01563-576089).

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Priority to Improvement 2005, Education Committee 01 February 2005

Implementation Officer: Graham Short