

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 23 MARCH 2004

### PRIORITY TO IMPROVEMENT 2004

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

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform members of the third annual re-issue of Priority to Improvement and to seek approval for a consultation exercise for the next annual statement of improvement objectives.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 requires education authorities to issue, annually, a statement of local improvement objectives. These objectives exist alongside the five national priorities. The approach taken by this Authority has been to develop the local improvement objectives under the five national priorities headings. This then allows the statement to be widely circulated so that schools and support services can develop their own improvement plans with minimal bureaucracy. This overall statement is known as "Priority to Improvement".
- 2.2 The original version of Priority to Improvement was the result of wide consultation. Its format, style and structure met with general approval. For this reason and in response to the views of schools and school boards' representatives the second edition followed the same approach. Again in response to views it was felt that the third edition should use the same model.

#### 3. PRIORITY TO IMPROVEMENT 2004

- 3.1 A copy of the third, revised, version of Priority to Improvement which covers 2004 is available in the Members' Information Point. It is presented in a salmon/buff form to distinguish it from its predecessors. A limited amount of restructuring also distinguishes it from earlier editions, with similar objectives being brought together. In summary the main changes are:-

##### National Priority 1

- "Developing a considered approach to curricular planning and flexibility" becomes "Meeting pupils' needs through curriculum flexibility".
- "Implementing aspects of the Assessment is for Learning programme" is added

##### National Priority 2

- "Forming student/pupil councils in all establishments and providing a range of experiences to develop self-reliance and self discipline, for example through buddying systems, mentoring programmes and "Circle Time" " becomes

- “Providing a range of experiences to develop self-reliance and self-discipline for example through buddying systems, mentoring programmes and “Circle Time” ”
- “Promotion of staged intervention in all schools as part of the initiative on Better Behaviour – Better Learning” becomes  
“Promoting Better Behaviour – Better Learning” through staged intervention.

### National Priority 3

- “Extending the existing Pre-5 and primary provision to meet the needs of secondary pupils” (in relation to Gaelic pupils) becomes  
“Consolidating Gaelic provision across all sectors”.

### National Priority 4

- “Extending awareness of young people of the global dimension” is added
- “Extending the involvement of young people in the decision making process of the establishment” becomes  
“Consolidating the involvement of young people in the decision making process of the establishment”.

### National Priority 5

- “Developing the foundation skills in young people by supporting family learning activities” is added
- “Increasing the number of young people participating in physical activity and sports within, and outwith, educational establishments” is added

**3.2** In order to assist schools further the idea has been developed that particular emphasis should be given to encouraging establishments to submit for the “Eco-school” award or status as an “SEN friendly school.” Progress towards either of these awards will provide a practical target that will assist headteachers in managing continuing improvement. There would be the added benefit of either award contributing to achievement of a number of national priorities. The authority would then prioritise support in the form of continuing professional development, advice, development of policies and related documentation to help schools achieve the awards. Heads of establishments have been consulted about the approach and have welcomed it.

## **4. PRIORITY TO IMPROVEMENT 2005**

**4.1** Having now promoted the various local improvement objectives for three years, there is a need to audit progress. This will be done between March and September 2004. The results of the audit will then, in conjunction with other initiatives, be used to form a new set of objectives. The related initiatives include:-

- The Community Plan
- Results from Service Reviews
- New National initiatives
- Developments in learning and teaching

- Developments in resources such as ICT.

It is essential to this process that a wide variety of groups are consulted. These include:-

- Teachers' unions
- Ancillary staff unions
- Heads of establishment
- School pupils
- School Boards
- Parents
- Other groups with an interest in education

**4.2** The result would be a new set of improvement objectives and a revised service plan that would guide some development from 2005 onwards.

## **5. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** Nil

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- (i) approve the latest version of Priority to Improvement
- (ii) approve the consultation exercise to develop new improvement objectives for 2005.
- (iii) Ask the Director to present a report on the results of the consultation in due course.
- (iv) Otherwise note the contents of this report

**John Mulgrew**  
**Director of Educational and Social Services**

**GRS/GRS**

**19 March 2004**

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

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**1.** Nil

**Implementation Officer: Graham Short**