

Schools Directorate
Liz Hunter, Director

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APPENDIX



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Dear Alastair

COMMENTS ON SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Thank you for meeting us on 22 April to discuss our initial comments on your Single Outcome Agreement. We found it a very helpful discussion.

I promised at that meeting to put our comments in writing, along with more detailed observations on the individual outcomes. I am sorry that it has taken me rather longer than I would have liked to do so. I understand that colleagues have responded separately on Fairer Scotland aspects.

I understand you are working with colleagues across the authority to refine the document and would be grateful if you could copy Dougie Atkinson into amendments as the draft progresses.

It would be very helpful to see a further draft by the end of the month, and if you could flag up to us with track changes or similar where you have made changes. I will be in touch this week to arrange what I may well be our last meeting this time round shortly thereafter.

I have set out our comments in the attached annex, following the order of the national outcomes. If you think we have missed anything from our discussion, or misunderstood the context, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

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General points

This is a good all round draft. We particularly like the context setting introductions to each of the National Outcomes. They provide a real sense of Moray and the local issues around each of the national Outcomes.

There is a clear recognition of the role of the voluntary sector and their inclusion in the consultation process. The 5 theme groups of the CPP have been established to align with the 5 Strategic Objectives. Recognition of the need to focus future community engagement on outcomes is also very positive. The SOA reflects well that all the public sector in Moray are signed up to contribute to the delivery of National Outcomes

The draft helpfully explains CPP and Council governance arrangements. The draft only appears to make provision for the ongoing development review of the SOA on an annual basis. Is this sufficient? Will you be putting in place more frequent monitoring and review processes allowing the SOA to be revised perhaps six monthly?

As we discussed at our meeting, not all of the outcomes in the document are expressed as such. Many of them are inputs, actions or processes. It would be useful to review the language used throughout the document with a view to achieving a better consistency of approach

We suggested that you should bring out as much as possible the links between the good analysis of the local context and the choice of local outcomes, and make sure that the priorities for the council are clear. Why have you chosen the local outcomes, which are the ones you are really wanting to focus attention on this year? What does the choice of outcomes say about Moray?

Similarly, you will want to bring out more the rationale behind the level of ambition shown for each local outcome. For some, you will be wanting to push hard either because you believe that the outcome is not being as well achieved as it could be or because you are aware that an improvement would make a major difference for local people. For others, you will be content with slight improvement or steady state.

We are aware that you have not had much history of using an outcome approach to base this work on, and are having to work up strategies in many areas rather than simply use existing strategies as a starting point. You might want to consider how you indicate this in the document, so that it is as much in keeping with an outcome approach as possible.

You might want to have a further look at the national indicators and the local indicator list provided by the Improvement Service to see if there are any of your indicators which are aiming at the same target but worded differently. If it is only a drafting point, and the differences do not relate to a real world point, then it would be really helpful if the standard wording could be used.

You are working on filling out the gaps in data, indicators and targets. We like your use of trends rather than figures/percentages in some cases and you might want to do even more of that. You might also want to signal indicators which you would like to use but are not developed at present. It would be helpful to know if you are expecting to be able to fill the gaps for the next draft.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 1

Local priorities are described well in terms of outcomes and there is a good read over from local outcomes to the national outcome.. Would the draft benefit from some form of road maintenance target or at least a direction of travel indicator? The proposed Indicators to increase business starts are welcome. What is Moray's target in the short and medium term? Given the nature of Moray, are very small businesses (beneath the VAT threshold) important to its economy?

NATIONAL OUTCOME 2

Local outcomes do not appear to focus well on the local priority of increasing employment opportunities. Could the draft better set out how local outcomes will lead to full economic impact/lead to more and better employment opportunities (links to national outcome 1)?

The focus on earnings is good, and we will be interested to see what you think would be a sensible target in the short and medium term. The clear target on MCMC individuals is the right emphasis but you might want to consider a direction of travel target rather than a precise figure. It might be worth adding an outcome on employment rate to summarise the other work you are doing.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 3

Number of targets and actions listed but could there be a stronger sense of local authority drive and direction?

The references to MCMC and the ambitious target are welcome (although see the comment on outcome 2) as is the stated commitment to delivering the DtS plan including increased vocational learning opportunities. Many of the actions in relation to research and development seem to be about developing business or action plans rather than actually about delivering the outcome. It might be worth having another look at the wording here.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 4

Not clear from the draft what attainment ambitions Moray has beyond seeking to raise attainment at S5/6. Only a minor reference to Curriculum for Excellence as part of Service Improvement Plan priority. That could usefully be strengthened to illustrate how the other 3 capacities are to be delivered. Using attainment statistics is fine for indicating successful learners, but you might want to think about how you can demonstrate progress on the other capacities.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 5

This outcome comes across as a strong local priority and the local outcomes describe the priority well. The combination of low average income and higher costs associated with rurality are rightly highlighted as having significant impact on a number of young people. Useful context given in relation to corporate parenting and early intervention. Good range of targets.

Pre-school attendance is not always the strongest indicator as Government estimates are approximate. Take-up is already close to 100% - so it is not clear if improvement possible. Some indicators feel quite processy – e.g. support for all those with EAL and ASN.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 6

Some further work is needed here. Community care and health improvement coverage both appear limited. We would encourage you to use local indicator 29 as issued by the Improvement Service.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 7

Good general context and relevant outcomes around deprivation and inclusion supported by suitable indicators.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 8

The target to 'increase the number of children being looked after out of the area' is a little confusing – it doesn't seem to match indicator title ("LAC figures") or baseline?

NATIONAL OUTCOME 9

The draft contains a good set of local priorities.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 10

Good local context and outcomes. Should there be an indicator/target for overall housing supply? and something about the 2012 target to provide settled accommodation for all unintentionally homeless?

The draft notes that you should achieve milestones in Standard Delivery Plan but doesn't state what these are. Unclear whether you are on track to meet 100% target by 2015. Should there be something about housing support for all vulnerable people, i.e. not just those over 65 who feature in outcome 6?

The low use of buses and rail in Moray suggests a local need to target public transport – have you thought about a public transport quality/provision indicator?

Are you confident you are providing an equitable balance between towns and country - and can you measure it?

NATIONAL OUTCOME 11

Clear local context and indicators. Should there be cross referencing to the flooding measures mentioned elsewhere?

NATIONAL OUTCOME 12

As expected, flooding features strongly and is given good coverage in the draft – clearly the single highest priority for council. We would expect the draft to identify your commitment to the Elgin and Rothes Flood Prevention Schemes. You might like to consider whether a local outcome and accompanying indicator on the historic environment might feature under this national outcome.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 13

Good coverage. Any scope for culture to assist in the area of diversionary activity?

NATIONAL OUTCOME 14

It is not particularly clear from the draft that the outcome agreement addresses the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change. There are no quantifiable landfill diversion or recycling targets present, and in this area we need specific targets to add up to the national commitment. (We would expect to see a landfill diversion target expressed as maximum total tonnes of BMW allowed to be sent to landfill in the financial year ending 31 March 2010 (ie. 2009-10). We expect this target to equate to or improve upon your existing landfill allowance scheme target for 2009-10.)

NATIONAL OUTCOME 15

Local outcomes cover the main bases and align well with National Outcomes, but there is no real flavour of what your local priorities for improvement are.