

REPORT TO: AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON 28 APRIL 2010

SUBJECT: CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE - UPDATE

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents information for scrutiny by the Audit and Performance Review Committee on Curriculum for Excellence in Moray, as requested by the Chairman at the Committee's meeting in March 2010.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section J (11) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to evaluating the actions Committees and implementing the Action Plan set out in the Corporate Development Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee scrutinises and notes the update on Curriculum for Excellence.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) is the major initiative in education in Scotland for learners aged 3 – 18. **APPENDIX 1** is taken from the Scottish Government publication 'Building the Curriculum 3' (June 2008) and gives an overview of the main elements which are driving this change in order to work to provide improved outcomes for all children and young people and overall transformational change of education in Scotland.
- 3.2 In terms of target dates the national aim is for implementation from August 2010 with the first S4 examinations under the new system taking place in 2014. However, given the comprehensive nature of CfE the exact meaning of 'implementation' has not been defined as CfE is about empowering teachers, staff, schools and other providers to undertake change in a manner which suits their context, builds on their strengths and enhances the life chances of children and young people. CfE is ambitious, impacts at all levels in education, requires an inter-agency approach and demands high quality leadership encompassing a delicate balance of guidance and empowerment.
- 3.3 In the context of The Moray Council, the Single Outcome Agreement identifies CfE as a priority and the Service Improvement Plan 2009 – 2012 clearly identifies CfE as priority 11 (**APPENDIX 2**). However, this is in essence an organisational necessity rather than a full recognition of the extent of the development. With the exception of improvement priority 20 (Library Services for Older People) it could legitimately be argued that all other priorities are either linked to CfE (for example, number 6, Early Years Framework) or are subsumed within CfE (for example leadership, self-evaluation, teaching methodology and development, etc).

- 3.4 In order to support schools, pre-school partners and other providers in Moray, a rubric was devised which allows self-evaluation against most of the main aspects of CfE. Also a 'position' document outlines the anticipated stage of development for August 2010. It is important to note that the empowering nature of CfE means that, for example, a school may not reach the 'position' for one particular aspect of their work because they have focused on other areas. This is perfectly acceptable as long as it has resulted from robust self-evaluation and careful planning and decision making. The rubric is given as **APPENDIX 3** and the position document is **APPENDIX 4**.
- 3.5 Clearly, given the extent of CfE, there is a need to synthesise information for this report which will merely outline a number of main points relating to developments in Moray.
- 3.6 In Moray we see Curriculum for Excellence as being about cultural, methodological and structural change. Cultural change includes our work on vision and values, distributive leadership and collegiality. A key aim of CfE is to develop a culture of empowerment so that staff working with children and young people are better placed to respond to needs. Methodological change includes assessment is for learning, Critical Skills, reciprocal teaching, developments in writing and in mental maths, approaches to enterprise and the use of ICT as a learning tool. Structural aspects include the organisation of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools, forward planning in primary schools, assessment and reporting.
- 3.7 Already a great deal of very good work has been undertaken by officers, in our schools and across wider partners to support the implementation of CfE. A far from exhaustive list would include:-
- 3.7.1 Work on vision, aims and values centrally and in schools and pre-school centres.
- 3.7.2 Developments in leadership as high quality leadership will be required at all levels to support implementation.
- 3.7.3 Improvements in learning and teaching through a clear focus on staff development with initiatives such as assessment is for learning, Critical Skills and work on the enterprise agenda.
- 3.7.4 Work on literacy & numeracy and health & well being which, under CfE, are the responsibility of all teaching staff.
- 3.7.5 Developments in self-evaluation through a series of events for headteachers and quality improvement officers (QIOs).
- 3.7.6 A move towards peer support for teachers and teachers supporting the development of their colleagues.
- 3.7.7 Very good and nationally recognised work in, for example, International Education, Homecoming and partnership with parents.

It is important to note that the ways of working and the initiatives being undertaken in Moray over the past four years actually mesh with CfE and so, in a number of respects we are not undertaking new work but continuing with existing work.

- 3.8 Recent Reports to the Children & Young People's Services Committee have been underpinned by CfE. Examples would include:-
- 3.8.1 The appointment of a 16+ Development Officer (to better meet the needs of young people intending to leave school and particularly the vulnerable).
- 3.8.2 Paired headships in primary schools (to support developments in leadership).
- 3.8.3 Uniform school week for secondary schools (to facilitate greater co-operation across schools and support the co-ordination of links with, eg Moray College and Banff and Buchan College).
- 3.9 Given the wide ranging nature of CfE it is not only of vital importance to all aspects of Educational Services but is also relevant and pertinent to aspects of the work of Community Services and of Moray College and Banff and Buchan College.
- 3.10 Support for authorities is available from the Scottish Government and from Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS). Particular support is given by LTS Area Advisers. Our previous Area Adviser left to join Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in April 2009. At that time he gave his assessment of the position in Moray. A copy is attached as **APPENDIX 5**.
- 3.11 Risks in moving forward. Given the complexity of Curriculum for Excellence there are a large number of risks in terms of implementation as each element of the development has its own risks attached to it. Nevertheless, five areas are worthy of specific note.
- 3.11.1 Assessment. There are concerns that the assessment required will either not reflect the ideas of CfE or will place great burdens on school staff. The Scottish Qualifications Authority has given assurances in terms of the nature of assessment. However, it would be fair to say that real concerns remain over this issue.
- 3.11.2 Complexity. Curriculum for Excellence is a challenge at all levels due to its complexity and the need to balance numerous components with a clear vision and direction. It is vital that those working with young people see connections across learning so that a young person's experience can support a number of learning outcomes.
- 3.11.3 Workload. It should be clear from this report that CfE carries workload implications for our staff. For our schools it is vital that School Improvement Plans and Working Time Agreements work in concert to support staff and control workload.

3.11.4 Resources. There should be no doubt that the current financial pressures on the Authority will impact (and indeed are already beginning to impact) on our capacity to deliver on Curriculum for Excellence.

3.11.5 National and HMle Expectations. There is no doubt that the National expectations are moving on in terms of the position to be reached by schools, community learning and development and authorities. As outlined above, Moray has done well overall in terms of CfE development to date. However, our capacity to keep up momentum and provide the development activities and support required over the next three to four years, must be a cause for concern.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

This report relates to Key Priority 5 (Attainment & Achievement) in the Single Outcome Agreement. It links to Action Area 11 (Curriculum for Excellence) in the Service Improvement Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

This report relates to emerging national guidance on Curriculum for Excellence which builds on the requirement of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 to secure improvement in the provision for children and young people.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

As outlined in section 3.11, progress in implementing Curriculum for Excellence will be affected by the current financial position of The Moray Council.

(d) Consultations

The content of this report has been agreed by the Senior Management Team within Educational Services.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and notes the position in terms of CfE in Moray.

Author of Report George Sinclair, Head of Educational Development Services

Background Papers:

Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Audit & Performance Review Committee/
28 April 2010/Curriculum for Excellence – Update