

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: Education Committee	Subject Annual Statement of Local Improvement Objectives
From: Director of Education	
Date: March 2001	
Ref: DS/KM	

Purpose of Report

To secure the approval of the education committee for the director's proposed statement of annual improvement objectives.

Recommendations

The education committee is asked:

- (i) to note the contents of this report
- (ii) to approve the use of the National Priorities as a focus for planning at authority and establishment level within the education services
- (iii) to approve the proposed annual statement of improvement for distribution to establishments

Michael O'Neill

Members wishing any further information should contact:

Michael O'Neill, Director of Education on 01236 812336
Dan Sweeney, Head of Quality & Support Services on 01236 812291

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Annual Statement of Local Improvement Objectives

Report by Director of Education

1. Background

- 1.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, received the Royal Assent in July 2000. The Act creates a new statutory framework for schools education that requires local authorities and schools to plan, monitor and report on improvement in education. Scottish Ministers are required to give strategic direction to the education system by publishing national priorities for education in Scotland.
- 1.2 In turn, local authorities are required to take account of these national priorities in preparing an authority annual statement of improvement objectives to be published each year starting in December 2001. School development plans, under the terms of the Act, must take account both of the national priorities and the authority's statement of improvement objectives.

2. National Priorities

- 2.1 The order setting out the National Priorities was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 20 December 2000.
- 2.2 The Statutory instrument is the result of a consultation exercise on *Improving our Schools: a consultation paper on national priorities for school education in Scotland*. As a result of the consultation exercise, the approach taken in the Order which defines national priorities differs from that originally proposed. The Order lists five key outcomes which Ministers believe represent the key priorities for school education in the immediate future.
- 2.3 The five national priorities are as follows:
 - Achievement and Attainment
'To raise standards of educational attainment for all in schools, especially in the core skills of literacy and numeracy, and to achieve better levels in national measures of achievement including examination results.'
 - Framework for Learning
'To support and develop the skills of teachers, the self discipline of pupils and to enhance school environments so that they are conducive to teaching and learning.'
 - Inclusion and Equality
'To promote equality and help every pupil benefit from education, with particular regard paid to pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and to Gaelic and other lesser used languages.'
 - Values and Citizenship

'To work with parents to teach pupils respect for self and one another and their interdependence with other members of their neighbourhood and society and to teach them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society.'
Learning for Life

'To equip pupils with the foundation skills, attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society and to encourage creativity and ambition.'

- 2.4 It is envisaged that these priorities will operate for the next three to five years, and will then be reviewed following consultation. Scottish Ministers will consult on and subsequently publish measures to track performance.

3. Consultation on Service Plan 2001-2004

- 3.1 The new Act specifies that a number of different groups must be involved in planning processes both at school and at local authority level. During session 1999-2000, the education department embarked on a major consultation exercise with all stakeholders, to '*consult on the way forward*' in the light of the various forces shaping the agenda.

- 3.2 In addition to the regular consultation mechanisms (Central Consultative Committee, Area Forums, Head Teacher Meetings, Joint Consultative Committee and Parents' Consultative Group) stakeholders were consulted in the following ways.

Staff - a number of cross sector and multilevel focus groups were consulted, each led by a member of the senior management team. Further consultation with staff was carried out using the mechanism of the Raising Achievement Working Group. A survey was distributed to all establishments in June 1999 and a questionnaire distributed to all Head Teachers at the three Head Teacher conferences.

Parents - were further consulted (led by a member of the senior management team) through School Board Area Forum meetings in Coatbridge, Cumbernauld and Motherwell and surveyed by questionnaire at the annual Parents' Conference in April 2000.

Pupils - consultation took place at the annual Youth Conference in December 1999.

- 3.3 From this consultation exercise and taking account of strategic issues and the overall purpose of the education department as outlined in the mission statement and pledge, five strategic aims were identified which provide a framework for the work of the department from 2001-2004. Each of these strategic aims and associated key development tasks indicate the areas which will be progressed to achieve the desired outcomes expressed in the aims of the service.

- 3.4 The strategic aims outlined in the Service Plan 2001-2004 are:

Promoting partnership

Promoting inclusion

Developing and implementing an authority strategy on learning and teaching

Developing skills for the future

Enhancing and extending the educational environment

4 Statement of local improvement objectives

4.1 It should be noted that the areas for development outlined in the Service Plan anticipated the Government statement of national priorities, thereby ensuring consistency and coherence between the local and national objectives. This has made it possible to align the key development tasks outlined in the Service Plan with the National Priorities and to construct the following statement of local improvement objectives for the education service in North Lanarkshire:

Achievement and Attainment

- ◆ Build on the success of the authority's early intervention initiative
- ◆ **Develop the 0-5 programme**
- ◆ **Implement modifications to the 5-14 programme**
- ◆ **Extend the implementation of the Higher Still programme**
- ◆ Promote the development of core skills
- ◆ Develop pre school education and childcare provision

Framework for Learning

- ◆ **Promote continuous professional development for all staff**
- ◆ Extend knowledge and practice in relation to new research in learning and teaching
- ◆ Maintain and extend the ICT strategy
- ◆ Improve the fabric of establishments

Inclusion and Equality

- ◆ **Develop effective alternatives to exclusion**
- ◆ **Remove barriers to learning**
- ◆ Extend Gaelic medium education

Values and Citizenship

- ◆ Further develop the strategy for parents as partners
- ◆ **Develop and implement education for citizenship**

Learning for Life

- ◆ **Develop and implement strategies to promote employability**
- ◆ Develop links with the business and voluntary sectors
- ◆ Extend learning opportunities which will promote the development of the whole person
- ◆ Develop and implement strategies to widen access to Further and Higher education

4.2 The priorities highlighted in bold are those identified for priority development during session 2001-2002.

4.3 The new legal framework has implications for the process of development planning in schools. Since November 2000 the Quality Development Service has organised a number of staff development opportunities for senior

management in schools to address the implications for school planning of the changes in legislation.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The education committee is asked:

- (i) to note the report
- (ii) to approve the use of the National Priorities as a focus for planning at authority and establishment level within the education service.
- (iii) to approve the proposed annual statement of improvement objectives for distribution to establishments.